

Prepare for "The Red Mazeppa: or, the Madman of the Plains," by Albert W. Aiken, author of "The Wolf Demon."

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LOVE'S INVOCATION.

BY MATTIE DYER BRITTS.

Good-by, dear love! God guide thee!
No sorrow rest beside thee,
No evil thing betide thee,
And this thy comfort be—
That when the day is ending,
Thy best-loved ones are bending
To Heaven, and upward sending
A prayer at home for thee.

We miss thy kind hand pressing
Our hands, with touch caressing,
We miss the gentle blessing,
Which ours was wont to be;
We miss the warm lips meeting
Our own with tender greeting,
And all our hearts are beating
With fondest love for thee!

Good-by, dear love! May nightly
Sweet slumbers woo thee lightly—
Sweet visions cheer thee brightly,
And this thy solace be—
That when the day is breaking,
Thy best-loved ones are waking
From happy dreams, and making
A prayer at home for thee!

Tracked to Death: OR, THE LAST SHOT.

BY CAPT. MAYNE RRID,
AUTHOR OF "HELPLESS HAND," "LONE RANCHER,"
"SCALP HUNTERS," "WHITE CHIEF," ETC.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE ASSASSIN IN RETREAT.

THROUGH the thick forest, going as one pursued: keeping a track straight as the underwood allowed; at times breaking through it like a chased bear—now stumbling over a fallen log, or caught in a trailing grapevine—Richard Darke fled from the place where he had laid his rival low.

He made neither stop nor stay—or, if so, but for a few instants at a time, just long enough to listen and try to discover whether or not he was followed.

Whether or not, he fancied it; again starting off, with wild terror in his looks and trembling in his limbs. The sang-froid he had exhibited while in the act of concealing the body, seemed to have quite forsaken him. For then he felt confident there could be no witness of the deed—no track or trace to connect him with it as the deer. It was the unthought-of presence of the dog that had produced the change, or, rather, the animal's having escaped. This, and his own startled fancies, for he was now really in affright.

He kept on for full a mile in headlong, reckless rushing. Then fatigue overtook him; his terror had become less impulsive; his fancies subdued in their exaggeration; and, believing himself far enough from the scene of danger, he at length desisted from flight.

He sat down upon a log, drew forth his pocket-handkerchief, and wiped the sweat from his face. He was panting, palpitating, perspiring at every pore. He now found time to reflect, and his first reflection was about the absurdity of his precipitate retreat, and then a thought of its imprudence.

"I've been a fool for it," he muttered. "Supposing some one had met or seen me? 'Twould only have made things worse."

"And what have I been running from? Only a hound, and nothing else. Curse the dog! Let him go home, and be hanged to him! He can't tell a tale upon me. The scratch of a bullet—who could say what sort of a ball, or what kind of gun it came from? No danger in that, whatever, and I've been stupid to think there could be."

"Well, it's all over now; and here I am. What next?"
For some minutes he remained upon the log, with the gun resting across his knees, and his head bent down almost between them. He appeared to bury himself in profound reflection. Something new was evidently before his mind—some scheme or problem—requiring all his power of thought to elucidate.

"Sweet Helen! I shall keep that trust," he muttered, seeming at length to have solved it. "Yes; I shall meet you under the magnolia—the accursed trysting-tree—this night. Who knows that by to-morrow I may not call it blessed? Who can tell what changes may be brought about in the heart of a woman? In history I had a royal namesake—a king of England, with a hump upon his shoulders—as he's said of himself, 'deformed, unfinished, sent into the world scarce half made up,' so that the 'dogs barked at him,' as this brute of Clancy's has just been doing at me. And this royal Richard, shaped 'so lamely and unfashionable,' made court to the woman whose husband he had just slain—a proud Queen—wooded and subdued her! Surely, this should encourage me! The more that I, Richard Darke, am neither halt nor hump-backed, No, nor yet unfashionable, as many a girl in Mississippi says, and more than one has sworn it."

"Proud Helen Armstrong may be; proud as Queen Anne she is. For all that, I've got something may subdue her—a scheme as cunning as that of my royal namesake. May God, or the devil, grant me a like success!"
At the moment of giving utterance to the profane prayer, he started to his feet. Then, taking out his watch, consulted it as to the time.

"Half-past nine," he muttered. "There won't be time for me to go home, and then over to Armstrong's wood-ground. Barely enough left to reach the trysting-tree. It's



"Helen Armstrong, my name is not Charles, but Richard—Richard Darke!"

more than two miles from here. No matter about going home. There's no need to change my dress. She won't notice this tear in the skirt. If she should, she'd never think of what had caused it, much less about its being a bullet. She won't see it, anyhow. I must be off. It will never do to keep the dear girl waiting. If she don't feel disappointed at seeing me, bless her! If she do, I say curse her! What's passed prepares me for either event. In any case, I shall have satisfaction for the slight she put upon me. I must have it."

He was stepping off, when a thought occurred to him. He was not certain as to the exact hour of the tryst under the magnolia. He might be there too soon. To make sure he plunged his hand into the pocket where he had deposited the letter and photograph, after holding the letter before the eyes of the dying man and witnessing the fatal effect. With all his diabolical hardness, he had been a little awed by this, and had thrust the papers into his coat pocket hastily, carelessly. They were no longer there!

He groped the pocket, searching every corner of it. Neither letter nor photograph could be found!

He tried the other pockets of his dress—all of them—with like result. He examined his bullet-pouch and game-bag; no letter, no card-board, not a scrap of paper in either. The stolen epistle, its envelope, the inclosure, all were absent.

After once more ransacking his pockets, almost turning them inside out, he came to the conclusion that the letter and picture were lost.

It startled, and for a moment dismayed him. Where was the missing epistle? He must have let it fall while in flight through the forest! Should he go back in search of it?

No; he would not. He did not dare to return upon that track. The forest path was too somber, too solitary, now. By the margin of the dark lagoon, under the ghostly shadow of the cypresses, he might meet the ghost of the man he had murdered!

And why should he go back? After all,

there was no need. What was there in the epistle requiring him to regain possession of it? Nothing that could in any way compromise him. Why, then, should he care to recover it?

"Let the letter go to the devil, and the picture too! Let them rot where they've fallen—I suppose in the mud, under some cypress-tree! No matter for that. But it does matter my being under a magnolia-tree in good time. So I stay no longer here."

Obedient to the resolution thus formed, he rebuttressed his coat—thrown open in the search for the missing papers—carelessly threw the double-barrel—the murder-gun—over his shoulder, and strode off to keep an appointment that had been made by Helen Armstrong herself—dictated by the purest passion of love.

CHAPTER IX.

UNDER THE MAGNOLIA.

PERHAPS for the first time in his life, Helen Armstrong walked with stealthy step, and crouching. Daughter of a large slave-owner—herself mistress over slaves—she was accustomed to an upright attitude, and aristocratic bearing. But she was now on an errand that required more than ordinary caution, and would have dreaded recognition by the humblest slave on her father's estate.

Cloaked and hooded—the hood drawn well over her face—with body bent, as she moved silently forward, it would have taken the sharpest of darkies to identify her as his young mistress—the eldest child of his "Massa." Colonel Armstrong—more especially, as it was after night she was thus cautiously proceeding, and under the shadow of trees.

Notwithstanding the obscurity, she was keeping on in a straight course, as if making some definite point, and with a purpose.

Does it need to be told what this purpose was? Love, alone, could call a young lady out at that hour; and only love—not allowed—perhaps forbidden, by some one

having ascendancy over her—only this could account for her making her way through the wood in such secret guise. At that same hour and moment Colonel Armstrong was busy with all his household, free white retainers as well as dusky slaves. Of the last there were not many left to him, Ephraim Darke having foreclosed the mortgage and obtained possession of the estate made over to him by private sale. Three or four field-hands and some half-dozen house servants—whose affection made them almost members of the family—were all that remained to the ruined planter.

He was about to move off with these to make the beginning of a new home in Texas, and the next morning was the hour appointed for starting. At an early hour, too, so that the night was being given to the final settlement of affairs and preparations for the journey. Thus, fully occupied—chiefly with outdoor matters—he had no time to give to his family. His two daughters he supposed to be equally engrossed with those cares on such occasions left to the female members of the household.

Had the proud planter—still proud, though now in comparative poverty—had he at that moment been told of his eldest born being abroad in the woods, it would have startled him. Further informed as to her errand—the keeping of a love appointment—it would have caused him to desist from his preparations for travel—perhaps thrown him into a terrible rage. And, made still better acquainted with the circumstances—who was the man thus favored with a nocturnal assignation, and that it was his own daughter, his eldest, the pride of his house and heart, who had made it, it is just possible he would have dropped whatever duty he was engaged upon, sprung to his pistols, and rushed off to the woods, on the track of his straying child, there, perhaps, to have enacted a tragedy sanguinary as that recounted, if not so repulsive.

Fortunately, he had no knowledge of aught that was passing. Engrossed in the cares of the night—the last he was to spend on his old plantation—thinking only of pre-

parations for the new home—he had no suspicion of his eldest daughter being absent from the house. He saw his youngest there; and she, her sister's confidante, both as to the absence and its cause, took pains to screen it.

Still stooping in her gait—casting furtive interrogatory glances to right, to left, forward, and behind—at intervals stopping to listen—Helen Armstrong continued on her nocturnal excursion.

She had not far to go—half a mile or so from the house. On the edge of the cultivated ground, where the primeval forest met the maize-field, stood a grand magnolia, that had been respected by the woodman's ax. This was to be the trysting-tree. She knew it—she had herself named it. It was the same tree in the knot-hole of which her trusted maid "Jule" had deposited the letter containing her photograph.

As she came to a stop under its spreading branches she threw open her cloak, tossed the hood back, and stood with uncovered face.

She had no fear now. It was beyond the range of night-strolling negroes. Only one in pursuit of possum or 'coon would be likely to come that way. But this was a contingency too rare to give her uneasiness.

With features expressing expectation, she stood under the tree—within the darkness of its shadow. Alone the fire-flies illuminated it, though it was one deserving a better light. But seen, even under the pale, fitful coruscation of the "lightning-bugs," so coarsely as inappropriately named, its beauty was beyond cavil or question. Dark hair, dark eyes and eyebrows, complexion of golden brown, features of gipsy type—to which the hooded cloak added characteristic expression—all combined in forming a picture appropriate to its framing—the forest.

Only for a few short moments did she remain motionless. Just long enough to get back her breath, spent by some exertion in making her way through the wood, more difficult in the darkness. Strong emotions, too, added to the beatings of her heart.

She did not wait for it to be still. Facing toward the tree, and standing on tiptoe, she raised her hand aloft, and commenced groping against the trunk. The fireflies gleamed on her slender, snow-white fingers, as they strayed along the bark; at length resting upon the edge of a dark disk, a knot-hole in the tree. Into this her hand was plunged, and after a moment came out—empty.

At first there was no appearance of disappointment. On the contrary, the phosphoric gleam, dimly illumining her features, there showed satisfaction, still further evinced in the phrase that fell from her lips, and the tone of its utterance:

"He has got it!"

But by the same fitful light, soon after could be perceived a change—the slightest expression of chagrin, as she said in murmured interrogation:

"Why has he not left an answer?"

Was she sure he had not? No. But soon she would be.

With this determination, she again faced toward the tree; once more inserted the slender fingers, plunged in the white hand up to the wrist; groped the dark cavity all around; then drew the hand out again, this time with an exclamation stronger than disappointment—discontent—almost anger.

"He might at least have let me know, whether he was coming or not—a word to say I might expect him. He should have been here before me? I am certain it is the hour—past it!"

She was not so. It was but a conjecture, and in this she might be mistaken, perhaps wronging him. To make certain, she drew the watch from her waist-belt, stepped out into the moonlight, and held the dial close to her eyes. The gold glowed brightly, and the jewels flashed joyfully under the moonbeams. But there was no joy in Helen Armstrong's face. On the contrary, there could be seen on it a mixed expression of sadness and chagrin, for the hands of the watch pointed to ten minutes after the hour she had named in her letter.

There could be no mistake about the time—she had herself appointed it. And none in the timepiece—she had full confidence in her watch—it was not a cheap one.

"Ten minutes after, and he not here! No answer to my note! He must certainly have received it. Jule put it into the tree; she assured me of it on her return. Who but he could have taken it out? No one is likely to know that. Oh! this is cruel! He comes not—I shall go home."

The cloak was once more closed around her; the hood drawn over her head. Still she lingered—lingered and listened.

No footstep—no sound to break the stillness of the forest; only the chirrup of tree-cricket and the shrieking of owls.

She takes a last look at her watch—sadly, despairingly. It shows fifteen minutes after the appointed time—nearer twenty! She restores it to its place, with an air of dejection. Sadness, despair, chagrin—all three disappear from her countenance. Anger is now its expression. The coruscation of the fireflies has a response in flashes less pale than its own phosphorescence—sparks from the eyes of an angry woman! Helen Armstrong is angry; and closely drawing her cloak around her, she turns away from the tree.

She has not passed beyond the shadow of its branches, ere her steps are stayed. A rustling of fallen leaves—a swishing among

those that still adhere to their branches—a footfall with tread solid and heavy—the footfall of a man!

The figure of one is seen, indistinctly at first, but surely a man.

"He has come at last," she joyfully reflects; despair, sadness, chagrin, all departing as he stands by her side.

But, womanlike, determined to make a grace of forgiveness, she begins by upbraiding him.

"You are here, indeed! Well, I wonder you came at all. There's an old adage: 'Better late than never.' Perhaps you think it betrays you? And, perhaps, sir, speaking of myself, you may be mistaken. Never mind! Whether or not, I've been here long enough alone. And the hour's late enough for me to say good-night—good-night!"

Her speeches were spiteful in tone and bitter in sense. She intended them to be both. While giving utterance to them she had drawn the hood over her head, and was moving off—as if determined to leave the lover who had slighted her.

Seeing this, he threw himself in front, interrupting her steps. Despite the darkness, she could perceive that his arms were in the air, and stretched toward her appealingly. The attitude spoke apology, regret, contrition—everything that make her relent.

She relented, was ready to fling herself on his breast. But not without one more word of upbraiding.

"It's cruel thus to have tried me. Charles! Charles!"

"Helen Armstrong, my name is not Charles, but Richard. I am Richard Darke!"

CHAPTER X. THE WRONG MAN.

RICHARD DARKE, instead of Charles Clancy!

Disappointment! This would be too tame a word to express the pang that shot through the heart of Helen Armstrong on discovering the mistake she had made. It was bitter vexation, with a commingling of shame. For her words, though spoken in reproach, had terribly compromised her.

She did not sink to the earth, nor yet show signs of fainting. She was not a woman of this sort. No cry came from her lips—nothing that could betray surprise, or even ordinary emotion.

As Darke stood before her with arms upraised, baring her way, she simply said: "Well, sir, if you are Richard Darke, what then? Your being so, does not give you the right to intrude upon me."

The cool, firm tone caused him to quail. He had hoped that the surprise of his unexpected appearance, coupled with his knowledge of her clandestine appointment, would have done something to subdue and perhaps render her submissive.

On the contrary, the steadiness of these had but stung her to resentment, and he saw it. His arms came down, and he was about stepping aside, and leaving her free to pass, though not without making an attempt to justify himself. He did so thus:

"If I've intruded upon you, Miss Armstrong, I am sorry for it. It has been altogether an accident. I assure you. Having heard you were about to leave the neighborhood—indeed, that you start to-morrow morning—I was going over to your house to say farewell. I am very sorry that my coming this way and chancing to meet you should lay me open to the charge of intrusion. I shall still more regret it if my being here has interfered with an appointment. Some one else expected, perhaps?"

"Then why do you stand in my path? Why do you stay, sir?"

"Oh, if it's your wish, I shall at once remove you of my presence."

He stepped to one side in saying so. Then continued:

"I am on the way to your father's house to take leave of the family. If you are not going immediately home, perhaps I may be the bearer of a message for you."

The irony was evident; but Helen Armstrong was not thinking of this; only how she could get disengaged of this man who had appeared at a moment so *mal-à-propos*. Charles Clancy—for he was the expected one—might have been detained by some cause unknown—a delay still capable of justification. She had a lingering hope he might yet come, and her eye interrogated the forest with a quick, subtle glance.

Notwithstanding its subtlety—notwithstanding the obscurity surrounding them—Darke saw it—understood it.

Without waiting for a reply, he went on: "From the mistake you have just made, Miss Armstrong, I presume you took me for some one bearing the baptismal name of Charles."

In these parts I know only one person who carries that cognomen—Charles Clancy. If it be he you are expecting, I think I can save you the necessity of staying out in the night air any longer; that is, if you are staying for him. He will certainly not come."

"What mean you, Mr. Darke? Why do you say that?"

The disappointing speech had made his impression, and thrown the proud girl off her guard. She spoke confusedly, and without reflection.

Darke's rejoinder was more cunning—a studied one.

"Because I met Charles Clancy this morning, and he told me he was going off on a journey. He was just starting when I saw him. Some affair of the heart, I believe; a little love scrape he's got into, with a Creole who lives near Natchez. By the way, he showed me a photograph of yourself, which he said he had just received. A very excellent likeness. I call it. Excuse me, Miss Armstrong, for telling you that Clancy and I came near quarreling about that picture. He had another photograph, that of his Creole *chère-amie*, and would insist that she is more beautiful than you. It is true, Miss Armstrong, that you've given me no reason to become your champion. Still, I couldn't stand that; and, after questioning Clancy's taste, I plainly told him he was mistaken. I'm ready to repeat the same to him or any one who says Helen Armstrong is not the most beautiful woman in the State of Mississippi!"

At the conclusion of this speech Helen Armstrong cared but little for his championship, and not much for anything else. Her heart was nigh to breaking. She had given her affections to Charles Clancy; in the letter written, had lavished them.

And they had been trifled with—scorned. She was slighted for a Creole girl! There was full proof, or how could Darke have known of it? More maddening still, Clancy had been making boast of her suppleness and shame, showing her photograph, and proclaiming the triumph he had obtained!

Oh, God!

This was the ejaculation that escaped

from Helen Armstrong's lips, as the bitter thoughts swept through her soul. Along with it came a half-suppressed scream—as, despairingly, she turned her face homeward.

Darke saw his opportunity, or thought so, and again flung himself before her.

"Helen Armstrong!" he cried, in the earnestness of passion—a passion if not pure at least heartfelt and strong. "Why should you care for a man who thus mocks you? Here am I, who love you truly—more than my own life! It's not too late to withdraw the answer you have given me. Gain-say it now, and there will be no need for any change, any going to Texas. Your father's home may still be his and yours. Say you will be my wife, and every thing will be restored to him—all will be well!"

She listened for the conclusion of the speech. The appealing sincerity stayed her, but she could not tell, or did not think, why? It was a moment of mechanical irresolution.

But, soon as it was ended, again came back into her soul the bitterness that had just swept it.

And there was no balm in the words spoken by Richard Darke; on the contrary, his speech was like adding poison to poison.

To his appeal she made answer, as once before she had answered him—with but a single word. It was repeated three times, and in a tone not to be mistaken. On speaking it she parted from the man, her proud, haughty step, with a denying if not disdainful gesture, telling him she was not to be further accosted.

Spited, chagrined, angry as he was, in his craven heart he felt cowed and fearful. He dared not follow her, but remained under the magnolia; from whose hollow trunk still seemed to reverberate her last word, three emphatically pronounced:

"Never—never—never!"

(To be continued—Commenced in No. 97.)

The Red Rajah:

OR,
THE SCOURGE OF THE INDIES.

A TALE OF THE MALAYAN ISLES.

BY FREDERICK WHITTAKER,

(ALANCO PONTYNE)

AUTHOR OF "THE RUBY," "THE GRIZZLY HUNTERS," "THE BLACK WIZARD."

CHAPTER XIX.

STOLEN AWAY.

WHEN the Red Rajah had announced himself in his true character, to Claude Peyton, with all his hand around him, the Virginian was thunderstruck. He stood staring, unable to speak, for some minutes.

While he hesitated, the Rajah addressed some orders, in Malay, to his band. Instantly the trembling *ayees*, or grooms, who held the horses, were seized, along with the amazed Doctor Brown, who expected to be murdered.

Inside of two minutes the whole posse were bound hand and foot, and laid in the middle of the glade, while the Rajah was calmly dressing.

Claude Peyton stood wondering, and expecting every moment to be served the same way as the rest. But to his surprise, no one offered to touch him. The mysterious taboo sign which had saved his life from the Papuan cannibals, seemed to spread itsegis over him everywhere.

He stood wondering at every thing, when the Rajah, erect and precise in his attire as ever, stepped up to him and addressed him. He did not attempt any more broken English now.

"Mr. Peyton," he said, gravely and politely, "you are a strange creature, a man who must give me your word of honor as a Virginian gentleman, that you will not try to leave this glade until sunset. Otherwise I must bind you, too."

Claude was forced to submit; but his curiosity induced him to ask a question.

"Tell me, sir, one thing, if you please. What is there in this mark on my breast that has such a marvelous influence on all the world? Among the savages it saved my life, under the war-drum. Here it seems equally powerful. What is the spell?"

"Mr. Peyton," replied the other, with a grave smile, "it is an old saying full of sense, 'Take the goods, the gods provide.' Ask me no questions. Remember, on your word, as a gentleman, you are to stay here till sunset. After that you may loose your companions. Attempt to leave before, and even my power will not prevent your death by the krisses of my men. One word more of advice. You went to seek the Red Rajah. Take care that you do not follow him again. The taboo tree will not protect you next time."

He bowed and turned away. The horses on which the dueling party had come to the glade were brought forward, and the Rajah mounted.

"Farewell, Mr. Peyton," he said, courteously. Then the little cavalcade swept out of the glade at a gallop. The footmen disappeared in the jungle. Claude Peyton was left all alone in the glade to his own thoughts.

"Not alone, though," he said to himself, as he watched the useful countenances of his bound companions. There they lay, as helpless as trussed turkeys, tied hand and foot, each man with a gag thrust into his mouth. And Claude was bound in honor not to touch them. And why not? He was perfectly free and unfettered. He could untie them with perfect ease. No.

A trifle, light as air, withheld him. A cobweb thread that a breath would part. And yet, to him, it was a chain, cable of steel. The impassable sentiment of honor was to him an impassable barrier between him and them.

His life had been spared by that Red Rajah, whom he had only heard stigmatized as a bloody pirate. He had been spared several times, when the other held him completely in his power. His honor had been relied on by that other, when bonds would have made him safe.

Claude Peyton walked quietly over to where his discarded garments lay, and slowly dressed himself. He did not dare to look round at his companions, for fear of their appealing glances to him.

When he had dressed, he walked around the glade once, peering into the jungle to see if any one was left to spy upon him. Not a soul was to be seen.

He returned to his companions, and dragged them out of the hot sun, one after another, under the shade of a lofty teak tree. Then he untied the gag which confined the doctor's mouth, and explained matters to the worthy physician. Luckily

for all parties, there was a considerable stock of cheroots in Claude's pockets, and he and the doctor were enabled to pass away the time till sunset, in talking and smoking.

At last they heard the well-known evening gun booming from the casemates of Fort St. John.

"Hurrah!" cried the doctor, feebly. "Now we can get off at last."

"Thank God!" ejaculated Peyton. He produced his knife in a minute, and cut the doctor's bonds. The two together very soon freed the *ayees*, and were ready to depart.

"We must get out of here as soon as possible," said Doctor Brown, hurriedly. "The whole jungle is full of tigers after dark, and we are not safe a minute."

The advice was so obviously sound that it did not need to be repeated. The dead bodies of the two unfortunate officers were necessarily left. They could not stay a moment. Picking up only the two dueling-swords, which had been left behind, the whole party ran off by the jungle path, as hard as they could go, and never halted till they reached the road by which they came in the morning.

But their dangers were not over yet. In the jungle all round them they could hear the answering roars of rumber tigers. Doctor Brown, who was a short, puffly man, with red mutton-chop whiskers, was quite blown with his run.

"By Jove, Peyton!" he ejaculated, "we must walk a bit. I'm blessed if I can get any further at this pace."

The cowardly *ayees* were too much afraid to remain with the doctor, and they were not much to blame. All unarmed as they were, they could make no resistance, should a tiger appear. While they continued their wild race to Singapore, Claude and the doctor came on slowly behind, each armed with a sword.

It was nervous work on that dark jungle road. The twilight was so short that it seemed as if day turned into night in a moment.

They could hear the tigers all round them, coming closer and closer to the road. "Shall we ever get to Singapore?" asked Doctor Brown, apprehensively, as a roar within a quarter of a mile made him shiver.

"Not to-night," replied Claude, cheerfully. "Here we are at the edge of Mr. Earle's jungle patch, and we shall be safe in a few minutes more."

They turned down the broad gravel road that led to "The Palms," as he spoke. Doctor Brown felt doubly thankful that they had left the last roar behind them, and that they were approaching a human habitation.

They walked rapidly along the broad white road that gleamed through the darkness. The moon had not risen and the stars were hidden in the evening mists. Claude felt a strange beating at his heart. Some calamity, he felt sure, had happened. The glimpse he had had of the Red Rajah's character made him certain that that chieftain would not leave empty-handed. Marguerite was gone certainly. As the thought crossed him, a spasm of pain convinced the young man how he had grown to love the little island princess.

"Ah!" he groaned to himself, "if I had taken her to Ponticherry this would never have happened. But I did it for the best."

And it was true. In a vessel belonging where it did, he could do no less than come to Singapore. Who would ever have supposed that a Malay sea-robber would have been able to hoodwink Europeans as he had?

"The man is no Malay, that is plain," said Claude, aloud.

"What man?" demanded the doctor, who thought he was addressed.

"The Red Rajah."

"Malay? Never!" said the doctor, who was an ethnologist in his tastes; "no Malay ever bore a face and figure like him. The man's either an Englishman or an American, or else he's the devil himself. Why, Peyton, what's this? What's the matter here?"

As he spoke, they entered the garden and beheld Mr. Earle's house before them, every door and window wide open, and a perfect illumination at every opening.

"Do they have a ball here to-night?" asked the doctor, drowsily. "For, if so, we look pretty objects, I must say."

Claude made no answer, except to rush across the garden and up the piazza steps. The house was still and silent. Into the dining-room ran Claude. Fifty wax candles, stuck into every nook and corner, made a perfect blaze of light. But the room was empty. He rushed from room to room, followed by the doctor shouting in vain for the servants. No one answered. Every door was opened, lamps and candles blazing everywhere. The illumination only revealed the emptiness.

In the midst of his agitation the idea of an enchanted palace flashed over Claude's mind and made him laugh to himself. But the wizard who had made the enchantment could only be one man, the Red Rajah.

At last he went into the drawing-room, which was lighted up more brilliantly than any other, and in a recklessly extravagant manner.

Mr. Earle's best wax and spermaceti candles were stuck upright in little pools of grease, all over the polished piano top. The center-table was covered with them, and every available place was occupied.

But, what attracted most attention, was, that in the center of the room a Dyak spear was stuck upright in the floor, and attached to the butt was a large paper.

"The explanation of the mystery," said Claude, as he snatched the paper and proceeded to read it, with the wonder-struck Doctor Brown.

It ran thus:

"The Red Rajah to Earle, Hoskins & Co. I have your senior partner, with seven other merchants, chartered a brig to make war on me. You burnt my house and took my child when I was away. Now I have taken your head and his daughter and hold them. One million of dollars in gold is their ransom."

"If it is not paid within one month they shall both die," said the Red Rajah.

"Known as 'The Red'."

"That's a pretty document to have in a gentleman's house," ejaculated Doctor Brown. "What's to be done, Peyton?"

"We must get to Singapore somehow, to-night," said the Virginian, briskly. "If we have to do it on foot."

"My dear fellow! Impossible!" cried the prudent doctor; "there are tigers enough about to eat up a whole family of men like me."

"We can find arms," said Claude, hurriedly. "It must be done. The desperate villain has carried off every living soul in the house, I do believe. There's not a sign of a human being anywhere."

"What's that?" cried the doctor, starting; "there's some one in that cupboard."

Claude bounded toward the place indicated. It was a small press or cupboard behind the piano corner, devoted to music books. The door was half open, and a slight movement was perceptible.

There was a terrified cry as the Virginian advanced. He soon emerged from the cupboard, holding by the collar a small Malay boy, whom Claude recognized as Julia Earle's favorite page.

The child was wild-eyed with terror, but a few kind words from Claude convinced him that no harm was intended him.

In time he recognized the Virginian, and began to sob and cry, and pour forth a flood of impassioned Malay, telling of the adventures of the terrible day.

Claude questioned him very closely, and soon managed to elicit from him the outlines of the following story.

CHAPTER XX.

THE PAGE'S STORY.

The story of the page was short and simple.

"About noon of that same day, a quantity of men on horseback had surrounded the house. Miss Julia and Miss Marguerite were in the drawing-room, when the men came. The tall Sahib who had come there yesterday was at their head. Miss Julia was crying. He, little Ismail, was frightened at the looks of the men, but the rest of the servants did not seem to care. They went out to welcome the Sahib. The Sahib staid in the drawing-room with Miss Julia, and Miss Marguerite for some time. Then he came out and issued orders to his men. Most of them went away, and the house was quite quiet for some time. At four o'clock Mr. Earle came home. The tall Sahib received him, but the young ladies had gone to their rooms. While the Sahib was talking with Mr. Earle on the porch, he, Ismail, crept into the drawing-room, and hid himself in the music-closet, to listen. The Sahib came back and brought Mr. Earle into the drawing-room. Mr. Earle looked frightened, and the tall Sahib spoke as if he was a Rajah, and the other's master."

After Mr. Earle's arrival, the men began to come back, and the Sahib went out on the porch. Mr. Earle, in the drawing-room, walked up and down, and cried out:

"Oh! my poor child! my poor child! A robber, a pirate! How shall I ever pay him? What shall I do? How I have been deceived!"

Then the Sahib came back into the room, and said:

"Come, Mr. Earle, the prahus are waiting in the creek."

And Mr. Earle began to beg the Sahib to let him off. But the Sahib stamped his foot, and said in a terrible voice:

"Am I a fool, old man? Your squadron is gone, but it may be back. You may write to your house for the money. You may send letters to your friends to get it. But you must come with me now. I give you fifteen minutes to get ready."

And then the Sahib went outside again, and Ismail heard the roll of wheels, as if several carriages were coming up. And pretty soon Miss Marguerite came in, with Miss Julia.

And Miss Julia ran to her father and kissed him, and they cried together.

Then the Sahib came in and spoke to them, and Miss Marguerite she got angry, and said:

"Very well, my lord. Then I will never love you any more. You have deceived me again."

And the Sahib he frowned, and stamped his foot, and said:

"Do it so, quiet angrily. And after some more talk, every one left, and Ismail heard them getting into the carriages. He peeped out of the window and saw that they had harnessed up all Mr. Earle's horses to his different carriages and carts, and they were all driving away, out through the back road."

"What back road?" interrupted Claude. "The road to the creek," said the boy. "It goes through the jungle, and comes out on the back of the island."

And after they had gone, who lighted all these?" asked Claude, pointing to the candles.

"After they went," said the boy, "I was going through the house, when I heard voices in the garden. Soon after, the strange men came back, some of them, and came into this room. I hid myself before they came, and I heard them talking about a Rajah, and how they were to go off to meet him at night. Then they went down into the cellar, and came back with several bottles of wine, and bottles to drink. They staid till nearly sunset, when one of them said:

"It is time to obey my lord's orders."

"Then they went into the store-room, and brought out six boxes of candles, and began to light them, and stick them everywhere, till the sun set, and we heard the gun in the harbor. Then one of them stuck that spear into the floor, where you see it, and put the paper on the top."

Then they went away and I was left alone. It grew dark outside, and it was so silent here, I was afraid to come out. I feared that the tigers were coming too. So I staid here, till I heard more voices, and you came in, Sahib, and I thought I was to be killed, surely."

Claude pondered over this story for several minutes. It was evident that the Red Rajah had laid his plans carefully. He must have bribed all the servants, except this boy, by some means. Where were they now? How had this audacious pirate contrived to get the prisoners away, and where had he fled to?

Claude turned to the doctor.

"Doctor," he said, "I must go to the city at once. The squadron has gone, but the prahu I took from that Rajah lies there still, with a Gatling gun on board. I must be off after him this very night."

"But how will you get to Singapore to-night?" asked the amazed doctor. "The road's all full of tigers."

"There must be some weapons left in the house," said Claude. "They've not stripped any of the rooms, I see, and there must be some in mine. Here, Ismail, are there any horses left in the stables?"

"There is one, Sahib," answered the boy, respectfully. "I heard the men telling of him. No one could mount him, he was so fierce. It is the black stallion they call Mankiller."

"I remember him," said Claude; "it's the little vicious Arab, doctor. Well, vicious or kind, I must ride him. Come along, doctor. I must leave you to take care of the house. Ha! listen to that!"

The roar of a tiger, close to the front of the house, made them start. Claude ran

down to the porch, and caught sight of the striped body, creeping along over the gravel walk. He shouted loudly, and the beast turned, and bounded into the bushes. Then they closed all the doors and windows on the lower floor, to keep out such intruders. Ismail was sent up-stairs, to put out the lights, while Claude proceeded to arm himself.

He found his room quite undisturbed, except for the illumination. His weapons staid in the press in the corner of the room. Not so much as an article of jewelry had been taken, though a diamond pin staid in the center of the pin cushion.

Certainly, the Red Rajah robbed like a prince, not like a pickpocket.

Claude put on a belt, with a pair of revolvers, slung his trusty Winchester rifle at his back, and lighted a lantern.

Then he called the doctor and Ismail, and the three sallied forth to the stable. The doctor carried a dark lantern, which he kept closed by Claude's advice. When they got near the stable they again saw the tiger. The doctor flashed his lantern in the beast's face, and the three raised a howl, which scared it away a second time. So they reached the stable in safety, opened the door, and entered.

The long stable, so commodious, nay, luxurious in its arrangements, was empty. There were sixteen stalls, and not a horse in one of them.

"Where's the Mankiller, Ismail?" asked Peyton. "You said they had not taken him."

"No more they did," the boy averred. "I heard them talking about him to the Sahib, and he told them not to bother with him; they could not spare the time, he said. So they left him in the loose box at the end of the stable."

Claude proceeded accordingly to the loose box at the end, and opened the door. When he looked in, he started back with surprise. The outer door of the loose box was open, and the same identical tiger was looking in at the horse. The stallion was crouched up in a corner of the box, trembling violently, and glaring at the tiger, wild with terror. Involuntarily Claude leveled the pistol he carried in his belt, and fired at the tiger. The bullet missed, but the flash scared the animal for the third time, and he disappeared. Claude went up to the horse.

Mankiller was a noted terror in the stable, and among Malay grooms. Claude had heard of his kicking a *ayee*, or groom, to death, and tearing another with his teeth. But the horse's spirit was quite subdued with terror, now. He allowed the Virginian to pat and soothe him, and lead him out of the loose box into the stable. He was only too glad of human companionship.

Claude saddled and bridled the stallion without difficulty, armed himself with a heavy whip and sharp spurs, and prepared to set out on his dangerous ride.

Sallying out, he found the moon just rising, and, accompanied by the doctor and Ismail, went toward the house. Mankiller kept close to him. The horse had been completely seared by the appearance of the tiger at the open door.

"Now, doctor," said the Virginian, at the porch, "I must bid you farewell. Keep the house close till morning. Good-by."

He turned the head of the Arab stallion, dug in the spurs, and flew off along the jungle path at full speed. He did not dare to ride slow. The roars of numerous tigers convinced him that he must do his best to get to the high-road unscathed.

Mankiller seconded his efforts, wild with terror. He tore along at such a pace that the trees seemed to whiz by. In half a minute he had reached the highway, and was rushing along it at full speed, toward the distant lights of Singapore.

It was not more than eight o'clock yet, Peyton remembered, and most of the people would be up. Mankiller went magnificently, never abating his speed in the least, for more than two miles; and after that the spur and whip kept him to his work, till he was close to Singapore. When at last Claude rode into the streets of the city, the vice was gone from Mankiller—driven out by excessive fatigue.

He rode up to the Governor's house, and sent in word that he must see his excellency.

steered eastward, right in the track of the squadron that left in the morning.

It was too late that night to do anything. Claude had determined to trust to his own resources, and those of the merchants of Singapore. He put up the horse at a livery stable for the night, and retired to the prahu himself.

In the morning he started out to see the different merchants in regard to his expedition. Imagine his astonishment, when he found that "The Palms" was not the only villa that had suffered on the night previous.

Blathers and McGrowl, Skinner and Biggs, each of these houses had suffered the loss of their senior partner, carried off in the dead of night from his villa.

In each of their counting-rooms was found a note, much of the same purport as that which had been left at Mr. Earle's.

Three hundred thousand pounds altogether was demanded for a ransom, to be left in a certain spot specified, within three weeks, on pain of death to the hostages. The spot mentioned was on a small island to the north of Gillole, and the money was to be in gold.

Each notice contained a warning against treachery, which would be infallibly found out.

There was of course an intense excitement throughout Singapore, when this news spread, as it did with marvelous rapidity.

There was no question of paying the ransom. Claude was begged to go out after the pirate at once. Provisions and water, with abundance of ammunition, both for the Gatling gun and the small-arms, was hustled on board the swift prahu short order. Sailors from every ship in the harbor were offered by their captains, but Claude chose to have none but Americans, on whom he could rely.

Before eleven o'clock in the forenoon, so great was the exertion used, Claude Peyton sailed out of the harbor on the captured prahu, ready for action. He had a crew of forty American sailors, many of them old men-of-war's men. Each of them carried a brace of navy revolvers and a cutlass, besides a breech-loading rifle.

On its pivot in the center of the connecting platform between the two boats, grined the formidable one-inch Gatling gun, the most murderous implement of destruction known to modern warfare.

The prahu was christened the "Bloodhound," and swift and staunch was she, as her prototype.

A fine breeze was blowing, when the Bloodhound went skimming out of Singapore harbor, cutting the waves like a knife. Peyton trod the deck with proud confidence. He knew that he was on board the swiftest vessel of the pirate fleet, one capable of out-sailing any thing afloat, except, perhaps, the Rajah's yacht.

The Bloodhound had evidently been used as a dispatch boat by the pirates, for her model was so keen and her framing so light that she could not have stood the recoil of a gun of any size. But the admirable qualities of the Gatling gun rendered it particularly fitted for use on such a vessel, sending a stream of heavy bullets, with little more recoil than that of a heavy duck gun. So that Claude felt perfectly at ease in the event of a battle with the pirates.

As soon as he was out of the harbor, he directed his course to the north-west, up the Straits of Malacca. He felt sure that the Rajah would make for Pondicherry first. Why, he could hardly explain. But it was the home of Marguerite, and he had an idea that the Rajah would take her there.

"If he had not promised to do so," thought Claude, "the child would hardly have kept his secret for him. He has deceived her in some manner, or she would not have gone with him."

With these thoughts he directed the head of the prahu to be laid straight up the center of the Malacca Channel.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 92.)

The Dark Secret:

The Mystery of Fontelle Hall.

BY COUSIN MAY CARLETON.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE LONELY GRAVE.

"This lived—this died also; never more on her shall sorrow light, or shame."

Yes, dead—stone-dead beyond their power to fast. More beautiful than she had ever been in life, she lay there before him; her famished heart, that neither wrong nor sorrow could conquer, was strong enough now; the little restless hands folded gently over the marble breast—so strangely calm, so fair and beautiful in her dreamless sleep.

Moments passed while they stood gazing on her, and neither spoke. The face of Disbrowe worked convulsively; and at last, with a dreadful cry, he flung himself on his knees beside her.

"Oh, Jacquetta! Jacquetta! Jacquetta!" "Too late!" said Frank, bitterly. "The world was not large enough for you and he. It is better as it is."

There was no response; but only that mighty cry.

"Oh, Jacquetta! Jacquetta! Jacquetta!" It was the cry of a strong heart in strong agony—so full of such quick, living anguish and remorse, that it went to the heart of Frank.

He looked down in the young face, once so careless and gay, but so full of mortal despair now, and it softened him as nothing else could have done. He laid his hand on his shoulder, and dropping his face on it, burst into tears.

"They broke her heart," he sobbed.

"She could never live disgraced!"

There was a step in the chamber; and the hand of Grizzle touched the young man.

"She left this for you," she said in a subdued tone, as if she, too, was a little softened by the sight of his despair. "She wrote it an hour before she died."

She handed him a small piece of paper, on which something was feebly scratched with a pencil. He opened it, and read:

"For all I have made you suffer, forgive me, Oh, Alfred! I loved you with all my heart and soul, and this is my atonement for my sin. May God forgive me! for I could not help it. When Jacquetta is dead, and you hear her reviled, try to think fondly of her, for, Oh, Alfred! no one in this world will ever love you again as you have been loved by her."

That was all. He dropped his head, with a groan.

"Thou shalt not see the kid in its mother's milk," said the deep voice of Grizzle; "yet it has been done now."

"Oh, my God! what have I said—what have I done?" he persistently cried. "This—this is what I have lost!"

Captain Tempest had entered the apartment, and, hearing that sad cry, came over, and with a sudden revulsion of feeling, so different from that of a moment before that it was almost like love, laid his hand kindly on the young man's shoulder.

"Lost through no fault of yours, Captain Disbrowe. I am her father; and here, beside my dead child, who loved you, I will say what I never said before to mortal man, that I am sorry for what I done to you!"

He held out his hand; but Captain Disbrowe sternly motioned him back, and answered:

"Were you ten times her father it would make no difference. She abhorred you, and so do I. Never will my hand touch that of her murderer!"

"Hard words, young man," said Captain Nick, his bronzed face slightly paling. "Every man has a right to his own, and she was my lawful child."

"I will believe that when we can gather grapes of thorns! But, as I said before, were you ten times her father, I would not care; for, here in the presence of God and the dead, I declare you to be as much her murderer as if you had held the knife to her throat! Let her blood cry for vengeance upon you till the day of retribution comes!"

"Take care!" said Captain Nick, growing whiter still. "One word more, and we are deadly foes for life!"

"So be it. Captain Tempest, you are a coward and a liar!"

"Now, by heavens!" furiously began the captain; but the strong hand of Grizzle was laid on his shoulder, and she spoke rapidly and imperiously to him, in Spanish.

"Respect the dead!" said Disbrowe, pointing to the lifeless form, and speaking in the deep stern tone he had used throughout.

"I quarrel not with you here. Fear not that a day of reckoning will come soon. Leave me now. I wish to be alone."

Even had he not been under the influence of Grizzle, there was something in the eyes and voice of the young man that would have commanded his obedience. Like an angry lion, robbed of its prey, he turned, with a smothered growl, and accompanied by Grizzle, left the room.

There was a long pause in the chamber of death. Like a tall, dark chest, Disbrowe stood, his arms folded across his chest, his eyes fixed on the small, fair face in its calm sleep, his own face like marble. What seemed the world, his coronet and prospect, his bride, in that moment, compared with what he had lost!

Well has it been said that we know the value of nothing until we forever lose it.

How she arose before him in all her entrancing beauty—bright, radiant, untamed as he had known her first—this matchless girl who had loved him so well! He recalled her in all her wilful moods, the fair spirit who teased and tormented him, yet whose bright smile could dispel his anger as a ray of sunshine dispels gloom.

He thought of her in her heroic daring, risking her own life, freely and fearlessly, for that of others—the tameless mountain fairy transformed to the ministering household angel, hovering beside the sick and suffering. How true and insignificant all other women appeared beside her—this high-souled fay of the moonlight!

This was the girl who had loved him and them so well; and, in return, they had hurled back her love with scorn, and cast her off like a dog from their gates. And now she lay there before him, dead!

There was no reproach in those closed eyes—in those sweet, beautiful lips—on that fair, gentle face, or folded hands. She had forgiven them all for the great wrong they had done her; but, oh! he would have given worlds at that moment for those lips that never would speak more.

Frank's deep, suppressed sobs broke the silence of the room. Once or twice he had looked up to speak; but that white, stern face had awed him into silence, and he felt, with a strange thrill of terror and pity, that it was possible for that dark, tearless grief to be deeper than his own.

Disbrowe himself was the first to break the silence. And his voice sounded strangely cold and calm.

"Disbrowe!—Mr. De Vere! He could not call him will they?—'knew of it'—"

"No," said Frank, with a sob. "I was just going to Fontelle when I met you that time, and turned back."

"How did you know this—this had happened?"

"I didn't know. I thought it most likely I should find her here; and before daybreak this morning I started off, and I found—"

"I found her—"

"A great sob finished the sentence."

"Disbrowe," said Disbrowe, drawing a long, hard breath. "When did she die?"

"Last night," said Frank, who was weeping as only a fresh-hearted boy can weep.

"And it all ends here," said Disbrowe, looking steadily at the death-cold face. "Her short and sorrowful story! Oh, Jacquetta! why were you born for such a fate?"

There was an unspeakable depth of bitterness and despair in his tone. Frank checked his sobs, and looked at him fearfully.

"There was another—the young Spaniard—where is he?"

"I don't know. I haven't seen him."

"Will you ask them—they will tell you," he said, pointing out.

Frank left the room, and after a moment's absence, reappeared.

Grizzle doesn't know, either, she says. He did not come with them after leaving Fontelle, but set off toward Green Creek by himself. Most likely he is there."

"Al!" said Disbrowe, "then he is gone before this. Well, perhaps it is better so; and, after all, he was not so much to blame, perhaps—poor boy! Frank, you ought to go to Fontelle and let them know."

Frank started up.

"I will go directly; but you—where shall I find you when I come back?"

"Here, if I may stay. Ask the old woman to come here."

Frank left the room, and the next moment Grizzle sauntered in.

"You sent for me?" she asked in a careless tone.

"Yes. I want to know whether you have any objections to my remaining here, while she—"

"He stopped for a moment. 'Until she is buried.'"

"No," said Grizzle, indifferently. "I have none. You may stay if you like. This is an inn, you know."

"I understand—you shall be paid. Has Frank gone?"

"Yes, I suppose so. I saw him gallop off."

"Very well. Will you leave me now? I wish to be alone."

In the same indifferent way the woman walked out, closing the door after her, and Disbrowe was alone with the dead! Dead!—how strange, that word sounded in connection with Jacquetta! He could not realize that she was dead. So calm, and placid, and serene, was her look, that he almost expected to see her start up, as if from slumber, to inquire what he did there.

Captain Nick had resumed his former seat, and sat moodily scowling in the fire. As Grizzle reappeared, he looked up and asked, surlily:

"Well; what did he want?"

"What do you suppose he wanted?" replied Grizzle, in a tone quite as amiable as his own.

Captain Nick growled out a fierce oath between his teeth.

"Tell me, you old beldame! None of your cursed mysteries with me! What did he want?"

"Really, Captain Tempest," said Grizzle, in a tone of provoking coolness, as she dropped on a stool before the fire, and with her elbows on her knees, and her chin between her hands, looked quietly in the blaze.

"Grief must have turned your brain. It is when you attempt to bully me. However, allowances must be made for a father's grief for the loss of an only child, and all that sort of thing, so I am happy to tell you he wanted nothing very sinister; but, considering what he knows, something pretty rash—in a word, to stay here all night."

"Humph! Alone?"

"Certainly! Frank has gone to Fontelle, I expect, and will not be back to-night; and who else is there to share his watch, unless our young Spanish friend comes—eh, Nick?"

And that's not very likely. My private impression is, that there is no particular love between Don Jacinto and the young and handsome guardian."

"Do you really think so?" And, as if struck by some ludicrous idea, Grizzle laughed outright.

"What are you grinning at, now, you old baboon?" demanded the captain, angrily.

"Nothing," said Grizzle, smiling grimly at the fire. "Oh, nothing!"

"Then I wouldn't advise you to do it," said her brilliant companion. "You are none too pretty the best of times, but you look like an old death's-head-and-cross-bones when you laugh. And so he is going to stay here alone all night with you and I, Grizzle? Be hanged if he's not a brave fellow!"

"I fancy he would risk more than that for Captain Nick Tempest's daughter."

"I tell you what, Grizzle, he's a fine young fellow, and would make a splendid high-sea rover—he would, by the powers!" exclaimed the captain, enthusiastically.

"Bah! you forget the way he treated you a while ago," said Grizzle, contemptuously.

"I don't care for that; there's a strong spice of the devil in him; and I'd give a bag of ducats for a dozen such hearts of oak among my crew."

"Really, now," said Grizzle, with a sneer, "what a pity so much valuable love should be lost! Perhaps you had better ask him to take a cruise in the Fly-by-Night to the coast of Africa. It would be a change for the future Earl of Earncliffe and Baron of Guiford—oh, my bold buccaner!"

"Tush! speak lower—confound you! Upon my word, Grizzle, I did not think he would venture to stay here alone to-night with you and I—I really didn't!"

"Pooh! he knows there is no danger—that it would be as much as our lives are worth to touch him; and, besides, he is armed. Or, what is more likely still, he never thought any thing about it at all. Lovers, you know, generally get into a state of mind when they lose their lady-love, and forget every thing else."

"Do they? You ought to know, if any one does—eh, Grizzle?" said the captain, with a grin. "I wonder what his high and mightiness Duke De Vere will say when he finds his quondam daughter dead and gone? Do you suppose he will take on?"

"He will feel it, and most probably will suspect we helped her off."

"Now, by Jove! if he dares to breathe such an infernal suspicion, I will brain him with my pistol!" exclaimed the captain, fiercely.

"You will do no such thing, my boasting friend. Will it not be a very natural suspicion, Captain Nick? Neither you nor I, you know, are thought too immaculate to be guilty of that or any other crime."

"Does he suppose I would slay my own daughter?"

"Of course he does—why should he not? What a blessed innocent you are, Nick!"

"You might do such a devil's deed, you old Mother! Horrible! But I would not. No, bad as Nick Tempest is, he would not do that."

"You saintly cherub! Talk of Satan's turning saint after this. Are you not afraid of making your father Satan, blush for his renegade child, if you talk like this? They ought to send you as a missionary to the Scalp-and-eat-em Indians. All you want is a bundle of tracts, and the Indians themselves will provide you with a costume, which, I believe, consists in a judicious mixture of red and yellow paint, some ornamental tattooing, and a bunch of feathers."

"Don't be a fool—will you?" said the captain, with a frown. "Stop your nonsense, and talk commonsense. Where is she to be buried?"

"Mr. De Vere, most likely, will see to that."

"He'll do no such thing. I'll see to it myself."

"Pooh! what difference does it make? The girl's dead, and what odds who has the better and expense of burying her? It's his duty to do it, too; for he had most of her while she was living."

Captain Nick looked at her in mingled anger and disgust.

"You miserable old anatomy! had you ever a woman's heart? No; I tell you, I shall bury her—I myself, as the spelling-book says; and Mr. Robert De Vere may mind his own affairs. He shall have nothing more to say to my girl, living or dead. To-morrow morning I'll be off to Green Creek for a coffin. I suppose I can get none nearer than Green Creek."

"No; unless you make it yourself."

"I had rather be excused. I could make a lady's bonnet as easily. Poor little thing! The other day, she was so full of life and spirits, and now we are talking of burying her."

There was a touch of something like melancholy in the captain's tone, that showed all his affection for his "little Lelia" had

not entirely died out. Grizzle looked at him askance, shrugging her shoulders, and smiled to herself.

There was a pause, and then the captain began, in a subdued tone:

"Grizzle, I wonder what made her die?"

"There's a sensible question! How do you suppose I know? She might die of fifty things—disease of the heart, or congestion of the brain, or a paralytic stroke, or a want of breath, or—"

"A broken heart!"

Grizzle lifted her head, and laughed aloud.

"A broken heart! Ye saints and sinners! Captain Nick Tempest, the high-sea rover, talking of broken hearts! Upon my word, Nick, you are getting to be the most amusing person I ever knew—as good as a comedy justice or the clown of a circus. A broken heart!" And the lady laughed again.

The gentleman's answer was an oath—"not loud, but deep;" and a mysterious hint about making her laugh on the wrong side of her mouth, if she did not mind. And then the amiable pair sulkily relapsed into silence, and remained staring in the fire without a word, for the rest of the afternoon.

Night fell. Grizzle arose, heaped more wood on the fire, and set about preparing supper.

She had fallen into one of her sullen moods; and to the questions her companion now and then asked her, she either returned short and snappish answers, or did not reply at all.

When supper was ready, Captain Nick, without waiting to be invited—for which he probably might have waited long enough in vain—laid down his pipe, drew up his chair, and fell to with an appetite no way diminished by the loss of his daughter and heiress.

Grizzle went over, and without ceremony opened the chamber-door where lay the dead girl, watched by her living lover.

He was sitting near the head of the bed, his arm resting on the pillow, his forehead dropped upon it, and his dark hair mingling with her bright, short curls, as still and motionless as the corpse itself. The sight might have touched any other heart; it would have touched the captain's, but on Grizzle it produced no effect.

Men seldom grow so utterly depraved and lost to every good feeling as a hardened and reckless woman will. She went up to him, and touched him lightly on the shoulder.

He looked up, and his face was like marble.

"Supper is ready," she said. "Will you come out?"

"No. I do not want any."

"I will bring it in, if you like."

"No. Leave me."

"Shall I fetch you a light?"

"No," he said, with an imperious wave of his hand. "Go!"

His tone was not to be resisted. She left the room and the lovers—the dead and the living—were again alone.

After supper, Captain Nick threw himself down before the fire, saying:

"Have breakfast ready bright and early to-morrow morning, Grizzle; you know I must be off to Green Creek by day-dawn."

Grizzle nodded a brief assent, and in five minutes the captain was sound asleep. Then, having seen to the fire and put the room in order, she sought her own room to sleep the sleep of the guilty until morning, and dream of the lonely watcher in the room of death.

Next morning, before the lark had begun to chant his matin carol, Captain Nick was in the saddle in a swift canter to Green Creek. Grizzle, curious to see the effects of his night's watching on Disbrowe, had softly opened the door once, and saw him in precisely the same attitude as that of last night—as though he had never stirred since.

"I knew he would feel it," said Grizzle to herself, "but hardly as much as this, I thought. This is revenge! I wonder where Master Jacinto is by this time?"

The clatter of horses' hoofs at this moment brought her to the window, and she saw Mr. De Vere, Augusta, and their family physician in the act of dismounting.

"I knew it," she said, with one of her hard, grim smiles. "They suspect foul play, and have brought the doctor to make sure. Well, they're wrong for once—that's one comfort! Oh, you had better beat down the doors—hadn't you? One would think you were master here, as well as in Fontelle Hall."

Thus apostrophizing the lady leisurely shuffled to the door; and, opening it, saw Mr. De Vere, very pale, and dark, and stern, standing on the threshold. The moment his eyes fell on Grizzle, he grasped her fiercely by the wrist, and said, in a hoarse whisper:

"Woman! fiend! have you murdered her?"

"You have brought a doctor—go and see!" said Grizzle, with a sneer. "Beat down the doors—hadn't you? One would think you were master here, as well as in Fontelle Hall."

If you have by all the hosts of Heaven, you and your vindictive companion shall hang as high as Haman, in spite of earth and all it contains!"

You threatened before, Mr. De Vere, and your threats ended in smoke, if you remember."

You will find to your cost, they will not this time. Where is Jacquetta?"

Not far distant. Ah! you here, too, Miss Augusta! Your first visit, if I remember right. Really, my poor dwelling is honored this morning."

Here, get along—get along—get along!" interrupted the doctor, impatiently. "We have no time to stand fooling here, old lady. Lead the way—will you? Take my arm, Miss Augusta."

Augusta, worn to a shadow, haggard, and deathlike, and looking more like a galvanizing corpse than a living being, took the little doctor's proffered arm, and followed her father and Grizzle into the house.

They entered the chamber, and their eyes fell on the bowed and motionless form of Disbrowe, resting beside the dead.

"Poor boy!" said Mr. De Vere, bitterly. "It is a sad blow for him!"

"Oh, Jacquetta! Oh, my sister!" exclaimed Augusta, with a great cry, as she sunk on her knees beside the bed. "Dead! dead! alone and friendless—deserted by all!"

Her cry aroused Disbrowe. He looked up; and seeing them, arose.

"My poor boy! my dear Alfred!" exclaimed his uncle, in a choking voice.

"Look at her, sir," said Disbrowe, sternly, pointing to the lifeless form. "Is justice satisfied at last? What do you think of your handiwork?"

"I am sorry—I am sorry. Oh, Alfred, the heart knoweth its own bitterness."

"I am aware of that, sir. She knew it, too, in her dying hour. Who is to answer for this death?"

"God forgive me if I have wronged her! I meant to act for the best. Have you been here all night?"

"Yes," he said, coldly and briefly.

"Still unforgiving," said Mr. De Vere, turning sadly away. "And I thought I was doing right. Poor child! how serene she looks! A dead saint might look like this. Poor little Jacquetta! Poor little Jacquetta!" he said, putting his hand before his eyes to hide the tears that fell hot and fast.

Disbrowe stood, like a tall, dark statue, with folded arms, gazing out of the window. Augusta wept convulsively, and even the little doctor's eyes were full of tears.

"Poor little thing! she does look like a dead saint, and she deserves to go to heaven, if ever anybody did; for there never was a better girl. Ah! she has the prayers of the poor and the weak, anyway, let the rich and the great turn against her as they might. I don't think there has been any foul play here. She has died a natural death, evidently; of a broken heart, most likely, poor child! You leave the room—will you?" said the little doctor, wiping his eyes, and blowing his nose furiously, and turning ferociously round on Grizzle.

That lady gave him a glance of supreme contempt, and obeyed.

For nearly two hours, the party remained shut up in the room, and then Mr. De Vere came out and addressed Grizzle.

"Where is Captain Tempest?" he coldly asked.

"Gone to Green Creek for a coffin."

"He may spare himself the trouble. My carriage will be here, presently, with one. I intend to bury her myself."

"Just as you like. It makes no difference to me."

"You can tell Captain Tempest that she shall be buried in the family vault, as if she were really my daughter, and it will prevent the talk and scandal that must necessarily ensue if she were taken to Green Creek Cemetery. It is a better arrangement for all parties."

"You can do what you like with her. A dead body is of no great importance to any one."

Mr. De Vere turned away with a look of disgust; but he paused suddenly, as the sound of carriage-wheels met his ear.

The next moment, the bolting voice of Frank was heard shouting for admittance; and he and William, the coachman, presently appeared, hearing between them that most dismal of all objects—a coffin.

Disbrowe's marble face grew a shade whiter as it fell on the ghastly object. The lid was taken off, and the doctor and Mr. De Vere reverently raised the slight, girlish form and placed it in its last resting-place. And then all gathered around to take a last look at the fair face they were never to see again.

How sweet, how placid she looked, like an infant asleep, with her little white hands serenely folded over her still heart, a faint, half-smile still lingering around the death-cold lips!

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MR. ALBERT W. AIKEN'S
NEW AND BRILLIANT

Romance of the South-west,

VIZ:

THE RED MAZEPPA;

OR,

THE MADMAN OF THE PLAINS.

IT IS

A GREAT STORY,

EVEN ECLIPSING IN INTEREST

THE NOTED ROMANCE,

"The Wolf Demon."

Our Arm-Chair.

Capt. Reid's Opinion.—A note just at hand from Captain Mayne Reid speaks enthusiastically of his "Tracked to Death." He says his own view of it is that it will equal, in all respects, his celebrated "Scalp Hunters," which, by good judges, is pronounced the best Indian and Border Romance in the English language. We are indeed glad to chronicle this return of spirit and enthusiasm to the writer, whose late severe and protracted illness, it was feared, would doom him to silence. May he live to a green old age to charm the world with his creations!

The new story having now gone over its preliminary ground, in its succeeding chapters transfers its locale to the far South-west, in whose wild life and strange associations the interest of the narrative is immensely intensified. Capt. Reid is there "at home," and readers will be loath to lose a line of what he writes.

Mr. Aiken and His New Story.—In answer to the great interest taken in the productions of Mr. Albert W. Aiken, and the frequent calls for his portrait, we soon shall present our readers with his likeness, engraved in our best style, from a photograph taken expressly for us. No living American writer has a wider circle of readers and friends than the author, whose literary reputation it is our pride to know we have so largely contributed.

The new romance from this gentleman's pen, viz.: THE RED MAZEPPA, now in the artist's hands for illustration, is, in several respects, the most striking and powerful of all his productions. It is remarkably unlike any other story we ever read, and possessed of elements as new to romance as some features of his WOLF DEMON, which, we are safe in pronouncing one of the most original stories that ever found its way into the popular weekly press.

What Books to Read. Emerson, in a late lecture, tells people what books to read. It all sounds as if the old stone Sphinx has spoken. What a wise world to be sure this would be! If the student, devoted his "spare hours" to old tomes, old authors, old philosophers! We should then become a race of Pandits; but, what then? Why, a race of fools.

We think the biggest fool we ever met was a professor, who, learned in Greek roots and Sanscrit, couldn't tell beef from mutton, and usually put on his pants wrong side out.

A strong infusion of common sense is a most capital condiment and tonic. While Chaucer is very good, and Spenser is better, and Shakespeare is best, what is new and is a reflex of the ideas, thoughts and feelings of to-day, is ever more desirable than the Sagas. To the American who devotes only a comparatively brief portion of his time to reading, the perusal of the books of to-day is of far more importance than to be conversant with the vast range of Ancients and Antiquaries.

To young men and women who, having ceased to go to school, yet wish to read, we commend first of all things a familiar knowledge of our own country's history; then of its geography and physical attributes; then of the best works of our own authors. If time and occasion permit, then a course in universal history is next in order.

But even this prescription is to be taken with a qualification, for there are people who neither have the proper books nor the opportunity for silent study. To such we say read: read your daily paper or your weekly, or your monthly magazine; only be sure to read, for by that alone can you obtain the knowledge and new ideas essential to make you a pleasant companion and a person of that practical, ready and pertinent intelligence which should be characteristic of every American.

Boys, Do You Hear That?—In a recent sermon by the blacksmith-divine, Robert Laird Collyer, of Chicago, he enunciated this Golden Rule:

"Industry, my young friends, is the first law of success. Some one asked a man, who was counted a great genius, to define genius, and he said, *Genius is industry*. Things never come about of themselves. The man who writes a book never wrote it in a day or a week. The man who has produced a great invention, did not combine wheel and piston in an hour or in a month, but it was the product of the industry of inquiry—the industry of application. Industry is the first law of success."

There you have it, boys. If you ever expect to be smart men—to become noted and great, you've got to work for it. Greatness is only another term for the industrious employment of good natural gifts.

Look around you among business men and what do you learn? Why, that the most eminent and wealthy of them sprung from the humblest positions! When the Grand Duke, the other day, was walking with Governor

Sewell through the carriage factory at Hartford, he asked: "Is it true that these men can step from the bench into Congress?" The Governor smiled as he answered: "I myself was a tanner by trade; and Senator Wilson was a shoemaker."

Indeed, so many of our eminent men have come up from the trades and the plough that it is fast becoming a source of pride to say, "My father was a hard-working mason, or carpenter, or shipbuilder, or machinist"—so much is labor honored in this great country, where men are reckoned according to their individual worth.

With you, boys, rests your own destiny. If you resolve that you will be "among the first," you will succeed as surely as you live if you steadily and honestly pursue your purpose. Make up your mind what you are going to do for life, then go to it soberly, resolutely, confidently, and victory will be yours!

"Criticism."—How doctors disagree is illustrated in the book notices of the magazines and daily press. One critic condemns heartily what another commends unqualifiedly; one sees defects where another sees none; one detects error where another discovers truth. So unlike, indeed, are their views, that a reader is in doubt not only what to believe, but questions if the critics are not "criticizing" different books.

Why this discrepancy? It certainly does not arise from prejudice, nor is it the result of a want of comprehension of the book discussed. It is simply a singular demonstration of the peculiar or individual character of each mind. Not only do very few persons think exactly alike, on the same subject, but all are impressed differently at different times, so that it may be said with truth that no man's views are fixed or permanent; we change constantly.

"Is this right?" you ask. "Are there no fixed principles?" Oh, yes; certain facts are fixed (and there are plenty of uncertain facts); truths in morals and science are fixed; results are inevitable, and to a certain degree are fixed; some rules of life and some modes of thought are fixed, or changeable only by imperceptible degrees; but it may be said that, so far as human reason is concerned, there is nothing fixed. The mind that seeks for what is to be the truth is not always safe in its pursuit, for many an enthusiast has gone to ruin. All we can do is to do the best we can and leave the rest with Him who doeth all things well.

IRREVERENCE.

A FEW weeks since, in the columns of the JOURNAL, I noticed an essay by our sharp little sister, Eve Lawless. I forget the title, but the subject was irreverence, and it so exactly accorded with my views, that I want to add my protest with hers.

I am sure, if her name is "Lawless," she shows a more delicate sense of the fitness of things than very many others, who imagine themselves to be the pinks of propriety. And if to be "Lawless" is to stand bravely up in defense of the good and the true, even if we must overstep the bounds of conventional custom to do so, then I wish some of the rest of us were a little more "Lawless," too!

So speak out, my dear sister Eve, and remember that, away out here in the West, miles and miles away from you, stands another sister in the JOURNAL ranks, ready to aid you to the best of her ability, with friendly hand and sympathetic pen, on the side of the "true, the good, and the beautiful."

Now I am going back to my subject. When Eve Lawless, in the little essay I mentioned, alluded to the growing spirit of irreverence which is manifested, when alluding to things which should be sacred, I felt glad to see that some one else, as well as myself, had been thinking about this matter. For I have been shocked at it, both in many of our best papers, and in conversation with those I meet.

Especially I have noticed the almost flippant way in which terrible accidents and sudden death are chronicled. For instance, just before me lies a paper in which I have just read this:

"A young man undertook to run over a railroad train above the bridge, last night. We learn he made a splendid-looking corpse."

Perhaps that editor or reporter, or whoever he was (Heaven forbid that a woman should be so heartless), thought that paragraph was smart—I thought it was cruel and unfeeling. It may be, that young man had a mother, or a sister, or a young wife, whose heart would be rent anew with anguish at the carelessness with which their aching wounds were treated.

The solemn majesty of Death should protect it from being a subject for heartless jest and flippant merriment. The solemn majesty and grandeur of Death, of which the great master who held the keys to so many heartstrings in his tender hand, says, in grave, earnest tones, "The old, old fashion, Death! The fashion that came in with our first garments, and will last unchanged until our race has run its course, and the firmament is rolled up like a scroll. The old, old fashion, Death! Oh, thank God, all who see it, for that older fashion, yet, of immortality!"

Charles Dickens bowed his reverent head and spoke such solemn words in the presence of death. But the petty reporters and penny-a-liners, who flood the country, and have less brains in their whole bodies than he had in his little finger, did in it a subject for pointless wit and heartless mirth. For shame on the public taste that will permit, much less encourage, such levity!

A few years since, in the little city of Indianapolis, there occurred a terrible accident, to some of the effects of which I was an eyewitness. Thank Heaven, about no near and dear ones in that dreadful explosion, but even I was pained and annoyed by the light, and even careless, allusions which found their way into the papers for weeks afterward.

And if I felt thus, how felt those whose homes were desolated, and whose hearts were broken in that fatal hour?

As another point, I have noticed with pain a growing lightness in the manner of alluding to events and occurrences which are directly in the hands of the Creator—such as the wind and the weather, even. For irreverence and flippancy are such, though manifested only in such ordinary topics as these, and, therefore, are to be avoided.

Even in speaking of the All Wise, himself, it may be seen in those journals which profess to be religious ones. I am glad I can say I have never seen an approach to it in the columns of the SATURDAY JOURNAL, nor do I much fear I ever shall.

All around us are growing up a generation of young children. What we make them, they will be; and from the influence we exert over them, we can not get away. As fathers and mothers, as brothers and sisters, as friends, even, we are associated with them—and they are watching us, to imitate us and learn from us.

If the seeds of irreverence, sown by us in their young minds, are so plentiful and apparent, what will be the fruit, when they arrive at the years we now possess?

These are words spoken in due season. "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

MATTIE DYER BRITTS.

A REASONABLE WORD.

A BAD man is a mistake. He is so not because it is "in him," but because he has not given the good also in him a fair chance by his assertion. If the good that is in almost every human head and heart were encouraged to grow, we should have far less bad people among us than now infest society.

It is as easy to be a good man as a poor one. Half the energy displayed in keeping ahead that is required to catch up when behind, would gain credit, give more time to attend to business, and add to the profit and reputation of those who work for gain.

Be prompt; keep your word; honor your engagements. If you promise to meet a man, or do a certain thing at a certain moment, be ready at the appointed time. If you go out on business, attend promptly to the matter on hand, then as promptly attend to your own business. Do not stop to tell stories during business hours.

If you have a place of business, be there when wanted. No man can get rich by sitting in stores and saloons. Never "fool" on business matters. Have order, system, regularity and promptness. Do not meddle with business you know nothing of. Never buy an article you do not need, simply because it is cheap, and the man who sells it will take it out in trade. Trade is money. Strive to avoid harsh words and personalities. Do not kick every stone in the path—more miles can be made in a day by going steadily on, than stopping to kick. Pay as you go. A man of honor respects his word as he does his bond.

Aid, but never beg. Help others when you can, but never give what you cannot afford to, simply because it is fashionable. Learn to say no. No necessity of snapping it out dog-fashion; but say it firmly and respectfully. Have but few courtiers. Use your own brain rather than those of others. Learn to think and act for yourself.

Be vigilant. Keep ahead rather than behind the times. Young men, cut this out, and place it, by careful perusal, in the golden store-house of your brain, and if you find that there is folly in the argument, let us know.

SHORT LECTURES ON DRESS.

BY THE "FAT CONTRIBUTOR."

COATS.

THE origin of the coat is lost in the mist of antiquity, where so many other things are swallowed up and mist. The very earliest is supposed to have been a coat of paint, which, among the aristocratic classes, was striped and varnished. A light coat of whitewash was probably worn in the summer months, though, in those days, it would be considered "too thin."

Joseph had a coat of many colors, and this rendered him an object of hatred among his brethren from the fact that they hadn't so many different colors of paint as Joseph had. They held a consultation over it, and concluded what was too good for them was "Not for Jo." So they scoured his pretty coat of paint off and laid him away in a pit, a solitary warning to young people not to despise a man because he wears a ragged coat.

It would be hard to tell when the coat of tar and feathers came in. The people who apply the coat are very generous; they don't charge a cent. In fact, they rather force it on a fellow. It is difficult to give a receipt for a coat of tar and feathers that is certain every time. In a general way any outrage upon public sentiment, in almost any community, is liable to fetch it. Try preaching against polygamy in Brigham's own household; declare in favor of free and unlimited license to sell liquors in any prohibition town in Massachusetts; or get up in a Woman's Rights Convention and boldly advocate the duty of women to stay at home and attend to their domestic affairs, and you are exposed. Either course persisted in might result in your being sent away in high-feather, to say nothing of the tar.

Coats of mail were very fashionable in the middle ages, although it must not be understood that none but middle-aged people wore them. Owing to the present masculine cut of feminine attire, it is sometimes difficult to tell coats of mail from coats of female.

The coat of mail was worn to protect the body of the soldier in battle. A great body of soldiers required a great coat, of course. The coat of mail went through the post-office like other mail matter, paying newspaper postage. Letter postage was unknown at that time, for it was the unlettered ages.

Before our ancestors had learned to make cloth, they constructed coats of skins, selecting animals that had the sleekest and warmest coats. Fur overcoats were exceedingly common in those days. When coats of skins were in vogue, I suppose it was as common to skin a tailor out of a coat as it is nowadays.

The expression, "tan his coat," originated during the above period in coat history. The price of the coat depended on how skins were coated in the market reports.

A coat of arms was once considered indispensable even in families that were destitute of vests and pantaloons. Old families, even now, make a great fuss over their coat of arms, when their arms are irretrievably out at both elbows. For my part, I shouldn't value a coat of arms, simply. I should prefer to have a collar added at least, even if there were no lapels or coat-tails.

Cloth coats came in with the invention of cloth, as there is no record of their having been worn before that period in the history of textile fabrics. (When I make the hat my text-ile) I shall enlarge considerably on the text-ile. Yet, there are those who assert that the coats of mail worn by many of the heroes of antiquity, as described by Homer and Virgil, the sensation reporters of that day, were made out of whole cloth.

There is great variety in coats. There are light coats and heavy coats; thin coats and overcoats; long coats and short coats; sack

coats and frock coats; coats to button all down afore, and coats not made to button afore or since; Coat's thread and turn-coats; swallow-tailed coats and petti—no, I will not venture upon that sacred domain. The petticoat is a question I will not raise in discussing fashions. My line is purely masculine, and I will not trespass upon grounds that belong by right to the Jennie Jones of the press. The petticoat shall swing in peace, or in pieces, according to its construction.

I have observed that a man usually goes to seed in a black broadcloth coat. Why don't he swap it off for one of coarser material that don't proclaim his condition so loudly to an unsympathizing world? There is so evident a suggestion of past prosperity in its fine though threadbare material, and its obsolete cut which whispers that it was in the long ago. The innumerable creases in the tails tell of nights spent in market-stalls, on lumber piles, and, alas! perchance in the station-house.

The sleeves are glossy from contact with many lunch-tables, and you could count the free drinks he has had from the dribblings down the front. From the outer side pocket the corner of a dirty pocket handkerchief protrudes, where erst the whitest of cambric flaunted. The solitary button which secures it across the breast, and the turned-up collar, are mute and melancholy evidences of the absence of a shirt. Poverty in a blouse or distress in its shirt-sleeves might be respectable and command needed assistance, but who would extend a helping hand to a man in seedy broadcloth? It is too significant of a broken-down gambler or a dissipated good-for-nothing.

AGILE PENNE, AGAIN!

To appear next week, a short serial by this well-known author, entitled,

Ludwig, the Wolf;
OR,
THE PEARL OF GUILDS.

A TALE OF THE OLDEN TIME.

BY AGILE PENNE.

AUTHOR OF ORPHAN NELL, THE ORANGE GIRL, THE DETECTIVE'S WARD, ETC., ETC.

Foolsap Papers.

An Old Letter to Sarah Jane.

"ESSENCE OF CONCENTRATED SWEETNESS: It is with unlimited pleasure that I embrace this opportunity instead of you, to seat myself with a good deal of chair-tility to write to you with an aching pen, the feelings of my heart, which are almost beyond the power of blue ink to utter.

"Angelical angel—seraphic seraph, I have engraved your everlasting name on the tablet of my heart, and I have made an excellent job of it, in Roman letters. You have never said that you loved me, and have never asked me to be yours, although I have given you every possible chance to, yet I believe you have metamorphosed your affections to me, and I have no doubt of doubts in regard to your regards, for my faith in you has removed them all, and the poet says that faith will remove every thing except bile, and I know that even gumdrops can never affect your love for me in the leastwise.

"Sweetness sweetened, I have not beheld you since last night. It is this being away from you that makes me feel you are absent, and always when I'm by myself this way I feel alone, for you are not present when you are absent, and neither am I. Last night your head lay on this shoulder. Blessed thought! The mark is there still, and I am grieved to say that it won't come out; but I am going to get a new coat this winter, if the price of pumpkins keeps up.

"Adorable adorableness, I love the very ground you walk on, and I would like to know how many acres of it your father intends to set apart for you when you marry. My mother has often talked to me about Hannah Perkins, and tried to wean me away from you; but, darling, I refuse to be weaned. You have the sweetest face that ever was painted, indeed you have. I told mother so, and she said she thought you had, too. It is as pretty as an india-rubber baby's, that cries and shushes his eyes, and has real curls; and then your disposition is as gentle as our white cow's, and I hope you won't make a disposition of me whatever you do.

"Sugar-coated lozenge, when you told me to call again last night, I smiled all the way home, I was so pleased, and the wrinkles are in my face yet, and that smile will never wear off. When I missed the fool-log, and fell into the creek, that smile wouldn't be washed off; and that kiss you gave me! oh, that I could wrap it up in a piece of brown paper, and tie a red ribbon around it, and put it away in a sugar-bowl, where such kisses ought to be kept!

"I was very sorry, when I was serenading you, night before last, that your father poked his head out of the window, and halloed to me to 'drive on, we don't want any soap, to-night.' He frightened me so, I fell off the fence, and knocked all the breath out of my accordion. I was sorry that he laid under the erroneous error of thinking I was the soap-seller, and I can't see how he could allow himself to be so mistakenly misled, for I never played 'Oh, Susannah' so sweetly as I did then, I am sure, and I know my voice was in excellent tune, for I had been playing and singing it all day in the barn, only substituting Sarah Jane for Oh, Susannah, though that night I did make a mistake several times, and got it Oh, Sarah-anah, and Oh, Susan Janah, though I made that all right by going back and correcting myself without spoiling the tune of tune.

"Dearest dearness, I must begin to quit by stopping here to wind up my letter to an ending and close, by finishing it and drawing it to a conclusion. I shall see you in my dreams, when I will converse with you more at length. Till then, adieu.

"Yours, with delicious delectableness,
"WASHINGTON WHITEHORN."

We have now, in the hands of the artists, for illustration, ALBERT W. AIKEN'S romance,

THE RED MAZEPPA;
OR,
THE MADMAN OF THE PLAINS,

which, in startling power, weird mystery, exciting interest of novelty and character, will more than satisfy the great expectations of our readers. In it, in several respects, this favorite writer has outdone himself; and the serial appearance of it, in our columns, will constitute one of the literary sensations of the day.

Readers and Contributors.

To CORRESPONDENTS AND AUTHORS.—No MSS. received that are not duly prepaid in postage.—No MSS. prepared for future orders. Unavailable MSS. promptly returned only where stamps accompany the inclosure, for such return.—Book MSS. postage is two cents for every four ounces, or fraction thereof, but must be marked. Book MSS. and be mailed in wrappers with open end, in order to pass the mails at "Book rates."—No correspondence of any nature is permissible in a package marked as "Book MSS."—MSS. which are imperfect are not used or wanted. In all cases our choice rests first upon merit or fitness; second, upon excellence of MS. as "copy;" third, length. Of two MSS. of equal merit we always prefer the shorter.—Never write on both sides of a sheet. Use Commercial Note size paper as most convenient to editor and compositor, leaving off each page as it is written, and carefully giving it its full or page number.—A rejection by no means implies want of merit. Many MSS. unavailable to us are well worthy of use.—All experienced and popular writers will find us ever ready to give their offerings our attention.—Contributors must look to this column for all information in regard to contributions. We can not write letters except on special cases.

Will find place for "The Sweet Girl that I Adore," "The Girl I Couldn't Marry," "The Blue Day," "Grace and Faith."

The serial by S. J. H. we retain for further consideration. "A Ride to the Bride" is too long. We return it for revision. "The School of Fate" is better for a magazine than for a popular paper.

Poems by E. B. T. we retain. Only a portion, however, can be used. "The Light and Dark Papers" we will examine soon.

Can not use "A Dream of Memory," "My Memory," "Music," "John Anderson My Jo," "The Last 'till' vulgar," "The Lady of the Reed," "All in Love," "A Night's Escape," "Escapade," "The Student's Love," "I Wish I Were a Beauty," "Give and Take," "Ellen Thornby's Straggle," "The Student's Love." All of above are returned where stamps were inclosed for such return.

The serial from Halifax, N. S., is retained in the post-office.

A package from Rochester was not taken by us from the post-office, because of underpaid postage. The law is too explicit for any one to misunderstand it. All MSS. to pass at "book rates," viz.: a cent for each four ounces, must be marked Book MSS.—must be fully prepaid—must be left open at one or both ends—and must contain nothing but the MSS. Any communication within, to the publishers, subjects all to letter postage.

J. E. T. The dark hue under the eyes is evidence of bad blood or a bilious condition. Nothing will take it away but a good condition of health. Miss E. K. S. No gentleman will take offense at a lady's neglect to recognize him at a party. He may be piqued thereat, but should not betray any feeling. If you admit a man and are too coy and modest to let him know it, he must indeed be blind not to see it in your eyes and acts.

XANTHOP. Your hot temper can be controlled by exercising a little—just a little, common sense. When you feel like "flying at" a person, fly away from them is a good rule. A lady who can not control her temper will lead a most unhappy life. No medicine will do you any good.

MATRICE. The profession of bookkeeper is just as much overstocked as any other calling. The effort of our young men to avoid what they call hard work has greatly overfilled the "gravel" callings. What this generation wants is workers. CONSTANT READER. Learn a good trade, by all means. That of machinist will also fit you for being an engineer, which always pays well—particularly on railways and first-class steamers, and, besides, it is a trade not likely to be overstocked with good workmen.

UNITED STATES. To subscribe a letter to the President, "Your humble and obedient servant," is an old set form of address which usage has so made a matter of course, that it is almost impossible to honor your independence. If you object to such a superscription to your name, why, do the other thing—use the conventional, "Your humble servant." W. H. E. "The Desert Queen" was published under another name, "The Surf Angel" is a short serial, and will be given when a favorable opportunity permits.

AS. The knowledge of grammar is as essential to practical life as good clothes are to the man. A man whose speech is ungrammatical is known at once as a person of defective education and of restricted intelligence. Study grammar, of course; it will do you a good service all your life.

SCHOOL-BOY. If you desire to render your boots proof against rain, snow and mud, you can do so by taking half a pint of linseed oil, a quarter of a pound of mutton suet, three ounces of beeswax, and two ounces of resin, melted together and well mixed over the fire. Rub well into the leather, and your boots are waterproof.

BOARDING-SCHOOL MISS. To dress in becoming colors, in which to have your photographs taken, be very careful to make a selection of dark colors. The light colors print white, and therefore make poor pictures.

MISS VANCE. By holding a lighted candle under the wire of the cage, and blowing on it, you get rid of the vermin which annoy the birds, as they always cluster upon the wires at the top of the cages.

WESTON. A set of furs is not a very common present given by young gentlemen to young ladies; but, if you are engaged to the fair creature, "to which the furs are so becoming," you will see no impropriety in the gift, but rather uphold the idea of your desiring to give her a handsome and useful gift combined, and not one with which she would weary in a day.

COUNTSLORE HARRINGTON. "Milton Gold" that has lately become so commonly used, is a combination of copper, zinc and magnesium. The value is about \$2 per pound—almost as good as brass!

WILLIS W. W. Regarding the carrying of sound through the air, depends much upon the density of the atmosphere, the condition of the surface of the sound. In clear climates, and in open country, it is estimated that the bark of a dog can be heard 1,800 yards; the human voice, 1,000 yards; and the croak of the bullfrog 900 yards. The frog is therefore the greatest success as regards lungs, when the size of a man or dog are taken into consideration.

GOUDON HAYS. The disgusting practice of cannibalism still exists in some portions of the world. The following are the tribes addicted to the practice of eating human flesh, and the numbers of the different tribes: The Baitas, 20,000 souls; Niger Delta, 100,000; the Fans, 80,000; the Cave-Dwellers of the Bassin country, 10,000; the Niam-Niam, 60,000; the Mitani, 2,000; the South American cannibals, 1,000; the Australian Aborigines, 50,000; the Melanians, not including New Guinea, 1,000,000. Total, 1,945,000 human beings are addicted to anthropophagy; in fact, the 69th part of the whole population of the earth.

Unanswered questions on hand will appear next week.

THREE GRAND LOVE STORIES.

BY THREE OF THE BEST LADY WRITERS

Now Writing for the American Press!

We have in hand, among numerous other most excellent and "taking" serials, three which we shall try and soon start in our columns, viz.:

Gelia's Deceit;

OR,

THROUGH THE FIRE.

BY MRS. JENNIE DAVIS BURTON.

BARBARA'S VENGEANCE;

OR,

The Curse of Chetwynde Chase.

BY MRS. MARY REED CROWELL.

MAGDALENE'S MARRIAGE;

OR,

WHOSE WIFE WAS SHE?

BY MRS. E. F

TO A COQUETTE GROWN OLD.

BY EDWARD JAMESON.

Sweet, wayward girl, who tossed thy head so suddenly,
When time sat lightly on thy fair, smooth brow;
And all the world aglow with happiness for thee,
Seemed melted into one unchanging now—
In which the golden moments sped away so fast,
Thou didst quite forget how silently doth age
Steal on the unwary; how soon is past
Life's prime, and written in its latest page.
How many lovers didst thou wantonly infect
With pang and fever, with a cruel smart?
Nor heedest thou thy better nature's interdiction,
That thou mightst wound some well-deserving heart.
One thou didst deeply wound, who sought relief
In climes far alien to his own dear land;
But absence could mitigate, not destroy his grief.
He sought for Greece, and fell by Moslem hand.
Couldst thou have seen thy picture which he tightly held,
Clasped in his hand with all the strength of death,
Unmoved, thou couldst not have that piteous sight beheld.
It would have blanched thy cheek, and stopped thy breath.
Do memories like that have influence now,
To make thy old age dreary and forlorn?
No child to cheer, or gently smooth thy furrowed brow,
And ease thee of Remembrance's bitter thorn?
Vain is it now to sit and wring thy withered hands,
And mourn afresh, each day, an ill-spent youth;
Thou canst not live it o'er again, and shadowy hands
Summon to answer for thy life's natruth.

Cecile's Sandal-wood Fan.

BY MARY REED CROWELL.

"MAY I have this, auntie? it's all broken."
Little Gussie Devon held it up before Cecile Fontaine: a fragrant, costly toy of yellow, delicately carved sandal-wood, and pale pink, silver-embroidered satin, with a tiny mirror, that was cracked in a dozen directions, and an edging of thick, soft down.
"Gussie! you must not meddle with Aunt Cecy's things! Lay it down, dear!"
Gentle little Mrs. Devon looked askance at the tall, stately girl by the window, as she spoke to the child, and with almost reverent hands took the fan from her and laid it under a pile of ribbons and laces that Gussie's busy fingers had discovered in Aunt Cecy's little trunk.
It was an exquisite side-face that was outlined against the blue sky; it looked like some Grecian grace, so pure and clear-cut.
She was very quiet as she sat there—this Cecile Fontaine—she had heard Gussie's request, and her mother's kind denial. Away down in her heart she thanked Mrs. Devon for her thoughtful consideration, the while wondering, with a shivering sort of terror, whether or not that agony at her heart would ever be so lightened, that she could bear to see careless hands touch her sandal-wood fan, and careless voices admire it.
It was three years old, that pink and silver toy, and her grief was a year younger.
Three years before Vane Van Emburg had given it to her—a hot, airless, starless August night—it had been when they two had sat on the gray rock at the foot of the splendid lawn at Fontaine Mere, and watched, through the dimness of the dusk, the flashing of the Delaware as it rolled on.
Three years ago! and she was Vane Van Emburg's betrothed then; proud of it, happy because of it.
To-day, as she sat in the window, where she could catch the sheen of the river, and even see the gray rock where they had sat, she wondered if those three years had sped on to others as they had to her; and it seemed as if little Gussie Devon's artless remark—"It's all broken"—had been a pointed arrow in her heart.
True enough, it was all broken—that proud, trustful heart of hers that had so rejoiced in that it had so much love to give. Like the sandal-wood fan, both it and her affections had been wounded by the same hand—the giver of the gift, the receiver of the love.
A year later the crushing blow had come; then, it was on a raging night, when a January tempest howled and tore around the house like some infuriated demon, anger-baffled that it could gain no admission.
Vane had gotten jealous—poor, passion-blind man that he was—because Cecile had permitted Howard Anderton to remove a wilted rosebud from her hair, and wear it in his button-hole.
It had only been most friendly sport—a sort of playful badinage between the old, old friends, Cecile and Howard, and yet, Vane Van Emburg, in a fury, demanded of the woman who was to be his wife, whom he was infinitely to trust in all things, that she should break her friendship with handsome him, in future, to be chary of her smiles.
Perhaps it was perfectly right in him, and dreadfully wrong in her, that he insisted so strongly, and she resisted so hotly; but it hardly seemed worth the coolness that sprung out of it; first a coolness, then neglect, then indifference—and then—then—Cecile's heart bled as she remembered how, in foaming anger, Vane had dashed the ring she had given him against the mirror of her fan, swearing it should no longer reflect a face so fair, so false.
That blow had crushed her heart; she knew of him only by report, and report said Mr. Van Emburg had gone to Spain for a great importing house on Broadway.
She never had seen him, but she never could forget him; so, when Howard Anderton had come to her and laid his heart at her feet, she told him she never should marry—him or any other.
And little Gussie Devon's question had called all these memories trooping through her brain; and when she heard Mrs. Devon's reply, and saw her almost reverent touch of Vane Van Emburg's gift, Cecile almost hated herself that she still worshipped him who had done her such wrong.
"No! let Gussie see it—let her have it for her own. Here, dear, bring the fan to me, and perhaps I can fix it."
Mrs. Devon's eyes widened in astonishment, but she discreetly said nothing.
And so, with childish delight, little Gussie took the sandal-wood fan—and Aunt Cecile's future earthly happiness—in her hands, and went out to her play.

"Rolf, did you ever make a fool of yourself?"
A clear, ringing voice asked the question; a pair of half-troubled, half-restless eyes looked eagerly up.
A cigar, that had gone out, lay on the round stand before him, and beside it a memorandum-book.
This he lifted off the marble, as he asked

the question of Rolf Edgeway, and began slowly, hesitatingly to open it, as if he half-feared to look upon its contents.

"I suppose I have done that same thing in my time, Vane. Have you any particular reason for asking?"

"Yes, hoping to learn the cure for the miserable result. Look here, Rolf; d'ye see 'em?"

He held out a rather curious token for a handsome young man to be carrying about in the inner pocket of a private note-book, and Edgeway lifted his eyebrows in amused amazement.

"A piece of a broken mirror, a fifteenth of an inch square—a bit of white swan's-down—and the fringe from a pink silk tassel! Vane, verily you have been making a fool of yourself!"

Rolf laughed as he completed his inventory.

"Not in keeping these mementoes, old fellow; the fault lies in the manner in which I obtained them. You've never heard me speak of Cecy Fontaine?"

A half-embarrassed blush tinged Vane Van Emburg's cheeks as that name left his lips for the first time in so many months.

"Cecy Fontaine? Not that I remember; and it is quite unlikely I could forget so charming a name. I wonder if she's any relation to General Fontaine, who is stopping here?"

"Rolf, you do not say General Fontaine is here, at this hotel? He's Cecy's father!"

"Then I've seen the young lady, I'm quite confident, with a delightful little Mrs. Devon—eh?"

But Vane had no answer for Rolf Edgeway. It was too much that Cecile was where he might ask her pardon, when he could have the sweet opportunity of humbling his pride before the woman he loved.

Would Cecy forgive him, after he had wounded her so? Would she take him back with all his present love, and let him atone in the future for that dreary past?

He had not a doubt of it. He knew, from some intuitive power, that Cecy was true—that she was free.

For himself, there was nothing he could not do for her sake; and he planned how he would go to her, and make her forgive him, and cover her beautiful, blushing face with the kisses he had so longed, so often, to give her.

He would even take those trophies of his triumph of love over pride—the fragments of the sandal-wood fan, and lay them at her feet, along with his love again.

And, thinking all these delicious thoughts, he paced the long room, disregarding of Rolf Edgeway's half-curious, half-amused scrutiny.

And then there came the pattering of little feet past the wide-open door, a swifter speed, then a fall, and a childish cry.

Of course both gentlemen ran to see what was the matter, and Vane picked up from the floor—little Gussie Devon.

"Oh! I've broken my beautiful fan! and Aunt Cecy just this minute gave it to me! Oh-h!"

Vane's heart gave one wild leap; then, by the sharp pain that shot through him, he accepted what he thought was fate.

So, then, while he had been fool enough to carry a precious part of that selfsame fan—his gift to her—she had thought so lightly of it, that she had given it to this chubby little girl for a mere plaything.

Well, he picked it up, and gave it to the youngster, and then walked over to the table where lay the fragments, and deliberately swept them out of the window.

He knew now that Cecy was neither true nor loving; and he? well—

He passed her that night in the promenade, with a cool bow, and an icy recognition.

Afterward, Cecile went to her room, with wildly beating heart and flaming eyeballs. It was all over now, at any rate. He had altogether forgotten the old times, and she, like a fool, had been cherishing a hope that now was crushed with one fell blow.

Poor Cecy! that night she cried herself to sleep, while beside her, on the pillow, little Gussie Devon clutched her newest treasure, the sandal-wood fan that had, all so unconsciously, wrecked the happiness of two people.

Vane Van Emburg and Mr. Edgeway were gone the next morning; on a tour to the Thousand Isles, Cecile heard casually, but she never saw him again.

Laura's Peril:

OR,
THE WIFE'S VICTORY.

A STORY OF LOVE, FOLLY, AND REPENTANCE.

BY BARTLEY T. CAMPBELL.

AUTHOR OF "IN THE WEB," "OUT IN THE WORLD," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XV.

FACE TO FACE.

OK that same evening on which Sarah Rook came to Sydneytown, there was a sort of fête at Robsart Place. A half-dozen planters, with their wives and daughters, were there in response to an invitation from old Elton, who desired to compensate his pet Laura for the loss of Newport's pleasures by a little home gaiety.

She had objected to the merry-making at first, but when she saw he was determined on it, gracefully withdrew her opposition, and entered into the spirit of the affair with a hearty zest.

Doctor Foster, who has just returned from a trip to South America, will be here with his sister, Mrs. Judge Placide, said Elton, as Laura whisked into the room in a cloud of snowy swiss; "and as he is said to be a lover of music, I want my little girl to do her best to charm him."

Laura laughed. "Perhaps he is as artistic as ardent; and remember, your opinion to the contrary notwithstanding, I'm not a burning Sappho by any means."

"But you must sing for him."

"Why must I?"

"I want you to please him."

"Indeed?" She raised her pretty arched eyebrows. "And why should I, pray?"

"You don't want to make a match, do you?"

"No, no; I want him to praise you. It does me good to hear people praise you—to know they feel the power of your beauty and accomplishments, and—"

"But that is very dangerous work, papa Robsart," she interrupted. "It's playing with fire, you know, and what if I should fall a victim to Doctor Foster's powers at the same time he falls a captive to mine? Would not that be a dilemma, now?"

Yes; he confessed it would, but he

thought there was no danger. "You're a woman of good sense, Laura, and of course you don't need a husband—and—"

She put her arms around his neck, and kissed him playfully.

"Certainly I don't!"

Then she went to the piano and played a sweet, doleful melody, the last notes of which were dying away as the carriage, containing the first of her guests, bowed up the avenue.

"That's the Perrys!" exclaimed the old man, rising and giving his cravat a twist. "I know by the speed they came at. They always drive at a gallop."

It was the Perrys; two daughters and a son, with a colored servant on horseback.

Laura kissed the girls, and bowed to the young man as she welcomed them in the receiving-room.

By this time guest after guest began to arrive, and finally the Placides' carriage, with young Doctor Foster in it, came whirling along.

The Perry girls, who had met the youthful disciple of Esculapius before, buzzed and fluttered about him like moths in the lamp-light, while Laura, after being introduced, turned away to entertain his sister, Mrs. Judge Placide.

The eyes of the young physician followed her, however, and the fate was scarce an hour old ere he managed to free himself from the witchery of the Perry girls, and seek out Laura.

The old folks were playing whist and backgammon in the reception-room, while the young people were waltzing in the brilliant salon. There was no formality anywhere; everybody had come to enjoy themselves, and judging from the animation of the scene, they were doing so.

When Doctor Foster came across Laura, she was leaning over Elton Robsart's chair, looking into his handsome face.

"Interested in the game?" he asked.

"Not particularly."

"Have you any objections to a stroll?"

"None; where shall we go?"

"Into the garden."

"Very well."

She placed her little dimpled hand on his arm, ever so lightly, and they turned away from the players.

"If I may please," said Rebecca, the English maid, plucking Laura's skirt, "there's a lady wishes to see you on some business in the garden."

"Business!" exclaimed Laura.

"Yes, milady; private business, she says."

"Then tell her to come to-morrow; I'm engaged now."

"I told her so myself, but she wouldn't take no for an answer. No, milady; pardon me, but she says it's better for yourself that you see her to-night."

Laura was frightened at these words, but controlled herself admirably, and said, turning to Doctor Foster:

"You will have to excuse me, doctor, until I see what this person wants."

"Alms, I presume," he said, a little nettled at the interruption.

"Very likely," was the reply; and then laughing lightly, Laura Robsart tripped down the short flight of stairs, and out into the garden.

"Where is this person, Rebecca?" she said in a calm, earnest voice.

"At the foot of the red oak, milady."

"Then, Rebecca, you needn't trouble yourself further. I'll go alone."

"Yes, milady."

The servant walked back to the house, and Laura hurried along down the shell-paved walk, until she came in sight of the red oak, which stood in a little clearing apart from the rest of the trees, and as was the night, she managed to describe the figure of a woman leaning carelessly against the trunk of the tree.

"What can this person want with me?" she muttered; "and then to send me such a peremptory message; to order me here as if I was her menial!"

By this time she had reached the place of meeting, and the dark figure advanced toward her.

Laura stepped back quickly. "What do you want?" she demanded. "Who are you?"

The woman threw up her veil that had, up to this time, concealed her features, and revealed the face of Sarah Rook!

Laura started, but she did not scream nor cry out, but said:

"What do you want? and why have you dared to come here?"

"You should know that, by this time," answered the English woman. "I have been wronged by you, Laura Robsart, and did you think for a moment that I would feel my hands tied, and let you off while you owed me revenge for that wrong? If you did, you are a great deal more innocent than I took you to be."

Laura tossed her golden curls impatiently. "I have no time to waste here, Mrs. Rook; no time to listen to what is to me a very old and tedious story; and I want you to understand this, that if you don't leave me alone, cease to intrude upon me in this way, I'll have you arrested. Yes, madam, arrested."

"You will?"

"Yes, I will!" Laura had gathered up her skirts, and was about to hurry off.

"Hold a bit!" Sarah Rook laid her hand heavily upon Laura's arm. "Since you talk about arrests I may as well tell you what you may expect in that line yourself."

"Me?"

"Yes, you, my pretty devil," answered Mrs. Rook. "Ah, you tremble now; the guilty are always in terror of the law; but, before I'm done with you, trembling will be a thing of the past so far as you are concerned."

Laura was sick with fright now, and while her breath came in hard gasps, her cheeks blanched with dread.

"Speak, tell me what—what do you mean?"

"I mean what I say."

"But, you talk in riddles. I don't comprehend."

"That's a pity—you don't understand. You who are usually so keen and sharp. Well, what if I were to say that I was once in Sydneytown, California, on a certain November night, in the Klamath mountain, that I heard a scream in a cabin, and saw a murder committed—"

"Hush, woman!" exclaimed Laura, leaping forward and placing her hand over the speaker's mouth. "Don't speak another word, or I'll—"

"Murder me in cold blood, as you did your husband!" rejoined the other.

"That's a lie! I did not do it in cold

blood. If you were there, you know I did not. I loved him too dearly for that—idolized him; yes, he was my idol."

"And yet you destroyed him." This with irony.

"You needn't sneer. You never loved Gilbert Rook half so passionately half so madly, as I did Cleve Robsart—as I do yet. 'Tis true I killed him, but he was mad with drink, and I only struck at him in self-defense. I did not expect to do what I did. I would have died sooner than have done what I did."

She was almost frantic as she spoke, and pale as death.

Sarah Rook was a trifle cowed, but she replied:

"Well, well, it don't matter what your intentions were; it is enough for you to know mine. To-night I leave for California."

"You do?"

"Yes, I do; and I go there for the purpose of having a warrant issued for your arrest. You needn't try to escape, for if you make one step in that direction, you will be immediately apprehended, and this old man, whom you have imposed on all these years, will then learn what a viper he has nurtured in his bosom."

Laura fell upon her knees, there among the wet leaves and grass, and, raising her hands imploringly, exclaimed:

"Oh, for God's sake! woman, have mercy—have mercy! I never injured you intentionally, and now I beg of you, for God's sake, to have pity on me—have pity on me!"

Sarah Rook shook off the hand that grasped her dress, and answered:

"I leave you now to gloat over your brilliant prospects; to enjoy pleasant dreams; to smile and blush and deceive, as is your wont. Good-by, Laura Robsart; when we meet again, it will be in the crowded courtroom. Good-by."

She rushed off, and Laura fell forward on her face with a wail that echoed dimly among the trees.

CHAPTER XVI.

DID HE LOVE HER?

It was the last night of the Houstons at Newport. In the morning at eight o'clock they intended to start for Oak Manor, and John Nevin was to accompany them as far as New York. He had business in the metropolis which would require his personal attention for a few weeks, but on the first of September he would be at leisure, and had signified his intention of spending the autumn with them in the highlands.

Mabel had grown tired of the dissipation, and Alice, who stood by her side on the beach on this last evening, was half glad, half sorry, that the season was over. If she had suffered during the first few days, from the knowledge that John Nevin was en route for Laura Robsart, his devotion since the departure of the beautiful widow more than made amends for the suffering of those days; and now, had John been going to Oak Manor in the morning, instead of to New York, she would have hailed the coming day with a glad smile. But, as it was, those two weeks of absence marred her pleasure not a little.

"I do wonder what is taking John to New York," she said.

"I don't know," Mabel answered. "He never told me, I'm sure."

Alice was silent a moment, then she spoke: "I wonder if Mrs. Robsart ever goes to New York?"

"Of course she does!" replied Mabel, "but you needn't fear that he is going there on purpose to meet her."

"Why not?"

"Because, John would be manly enough to tell you, if he was; there is nothing of the sneak about John Nevin, and I know his passion for Laura Robsart is fading away every day."

"Did he tell you so?" eagerly.

"No; men are not so communicative as girls about such matters, but I can see it in his devotion to you. Besides, I don't think Laura gives him the slightest encouragement. I think she discovered, ere she went away, the relationship existing between you and him, and, had she, she would encourage his attentions after that."

"You seem to have great faith in this woman," said Alice, after a pause.

Mabel was tempted to tell of her visit to Rockledge, but she hesitated to relate to her the part she had played there, and so responded simply:

"I never heard any thing against her, save that there is a certain glamour about her; that her beauty is almost irresistible, and I'm sure she can't help that."

"No," Alice said, "she can't help that, of course."

The young ladies were interrupted at this juncture by the arrival of George Dalby, who proposed a sail.

"This is your last night with us," he urged, "and, as we may never meet again, why not have a parting sail?"

They consented.

"But, where is John? Let's have John with us," said Mabel.

"I left him writing letters," answered Dalby. "He ought to be through by this time, though."

"I will run up and see," said Mabel, and she slipped off her dress.

She found John Nevin in the reception-room, his hands crossed idly, and his gaze fixed upon a patch of blue sky, which showed through a rift in the drapery of the window, beyond which he sat.

"Well, John, we're going for a sail with George Dalby," said Mabel. "Will you come?"

"Certainly, Mabel; I'm much obliged for the invitation."

He tapped to his feet, and a letter fluttered to the floor. He stooped down, and picked it up hastily, but not before Mabel's quick eye caught the superscription; it was addressed to Laura Robsart, Sydneytown, Maryland.

Mabel did not speak, but she felt very bitter toward John Nevin for the remainder of the evening.

Early on the following morning the trunks were packed, and, after an hour or so of bustle and worry, Newport was left far to the eastward.

George Dalby accompanied our friends to the depot, and, ere the train rattled off, he promised Mabel to visit her during the coming winter. When they reached New York, John Nevin parted with them.

"You must not waste your time here, in this ugly city," cried Captain Houston. "We'll look for you in a fortnight, remember."

"In a fortnight," he replied, waving his hand gayly from the window of the Astor House coach.

Alice watched the vehicle until it was lost in the throngs; then she closed her eyes and wished these two weeks were past and gone.

One week after, John Nevin approached the clerk's desk at the Astor.

"Any letters?" he asked.

"The name, please?"

"Nevin—John Nevin."

"Yes, sir. Here you are—two."

One was a large, yellow-enveloped affair; the other a white, square missive, scented with rose-leaves.

The handwriting was not familiar, but the post-mark was Sydneytown, Maryland, and Laura Robsart's monogram was on the envelope.

He would not trust himself to read it there; its contents were too sacred—too precious, to be unveiled among the matter-of-fact crowd. And so he placed it in his breast-pocket and went up stairs to his room.

John Nevin was not what most persons would call a sentimental man; indeed, he enjoyed the reputation of being of an exceedingly practical turn; yet, when he found himself entirely alone, he took out her letter and kissed it.

Then he sat down, took out his penknife, and opened the envelope without spoiling the monogram. The aroma from the leaves, the straight legibility of the lines, struck him as being decidedly characteristic.

"Like herself," he muttered, "all neatness and sweetness."

Now he began to read. His cheek blanched at the first words, and he could scarce believe the evidence of his senses. The letter ran as follows:

"ROBSART PLACE, July 18—

"MR. JOHN NEVIN:

"Sir—Your kind favor of the 23d has just come to hand, and while I acknowledge that its contents flattered me, I must assure you that it has astonished and grieved me a great deal—more than I can write now. Believe me when I say that you were always regarded by me as a friend—nothing more. I never loved but one man—Cleve Robsart—and since his death I have never for a moment thought of marrying again. From what has passed between us, it is better for both parties that we never meet again, and I trust you will avoid me in the future. Thanking you sincerely for your past friendship, believe me,

Yours,

"LAURA ROBSART."

He crushed the unoffending paper in his hand as he read the last sentence, and then let the cold words flutter down on the carpet.

"I could never have believed it of her," he cried. "Cold, unfeeling, treacherous. All these fine phrases of astonishment and regret are but the shallow coating to her deception. Avoid you, Laura Robsart! Yes, I trust fate will

into the air. He was unbuilding the chimney!

While thus working—a slow, difficult task, for the bricks stuck pretty firm, notwithstanding the decay age had wrought upon the mortar—the murmur of voices reached him. It came up the flue into which he had scrambled to escape Nemil's pistol-shot.

"Thought so," he muttered. "Now, see, if I'd gone down, as I was tempted to once, I'd have come out in some room or other, and landed right on top of—bless me! how they stick. The fellow must have nailed 'em fast! They won't—(wrench!)—won't—(wrench!)—c-o-m-e!" finally dislodging a stubborn brick and casting it, with a spiteful twist of the wrist, away from him.

Just then he paused. He saw a man coming toward the house. "I've a good notion to sing out and let him know I'm—eh? Well, now! Why, hang it!—what's he doing here?" He had recognized Herwin Reese, and knew him well as the valet of Reginald Darnley.

"Well!—of all the gangs I ever did come across! Now, here's another. I know he's going to stop here—yes—there! I said so." Reese disappeared, and Crewly heard the door-knocker rap sharply.

This circumstance set him to thinking. He wondered what Reese could have in common with the parties he was tracking. How long he was idle in mental conjecture, he knew not, but he was aroused by seeing some one else approaching.

Again there was an exclamation of surprise on the part of the lawyer, for he discovered this second comer to be Reginald Darnley.

The young man had no sooner entered the house than another form, that had evidently been following close behind him, crossed the street, and stood leaning against the fence of the White Horse Lot.

"It was now so dark that he could not distinguish the features of the last party, who stood over the way, silent and motionless as a statue."

Crewly was a little mystified.

"What's he got to do with it, I'd like to know? Wonder who he is?"

Suddenly, acting upon a resolution he had framed, he raised his voice to a key that broke in an unmusical squeak, and cried:

"I say—you over there!"

The figure started, moved back a pace, but made no reply.

"I say—you! I'm Chris. Crewly, all the way from Richmond, up a chimney! Can't you help me out?"

Then there was an answer to this cry—an answer that made the lawyer's heart thump.

"Is that you, Mr. Crewly?"

"Me? me?" he screamed, in delight; "of course it's me! Bless me, where did you land from? Come here, Waldron—round the edge of the house, where I can talk to you. Come on. Hang it! look what a fix I'm in. Can you see me?"—waving his arms so as to discover his exact situation.

Henry Waldron, with mind mazed in astonishment, went around to the side of the house, and looked upward at his friend, who was hanging half-way over the chimney edge and gesticulating in frantic earnestness.

"Where did you drop from, Waldron? There!—I'm ready to howl! Look at me—I've been playing chimney-sweep! You ought to see me once! Can you make out where I am? Look—up here!"

"Mr. Crewly!" Henry Waldron was lost in amazement.

"Yes, it's me, Chris. Crewly—yours forever. Say, can't you help me out?"

"How on earth came you up there?" cried back the young man.

"All through following that actress girl! Had a fight this afternoon—a big negro and a devil of a hog. Lost my umbrella, too!"

"But, how did you ever get into such a fix as—"

"Beat me at a fair stand-up-scrimmage!—fact! Knocked me upside—put a hole in the only hat I had, and then chuckled me down in the cellar, right in the ash-heap! I'm all over dirt! Been up here since—but, I say, you've got to get me out. Hurry up!"

"I'll enter the house at once!"

"No, no, no—no!" interrupted Crewly, excitedly. "That won't do, they'd scalp you in a pair of seconds!"

"What's to be done, then?"

"Police!" was the laconic instruction.

"Ah! yes—I see," and Waldron turned quickly away.

"Fly! scoot! jump!" sung out Crewly, after him. "There's business ahead. Bring a whole posse—he's gone. Now, then"—longing to jump and crack his heels—for he forgot his gravity in the extreme exuberance of spirit which ensued upon this prospect of speedy deliverance—"I'll soon be out of this. He'll bring the police; then, down I go, into somebody's dormitory, like a sputter of gunpowder. Crewly, you vagabond, you're in for it. Wish he'd hurry. Sakes! how my limbs ache! If I only had my umbrella, now, I'd try to break a nose or two when I—"

He was cut short by a piercing shriek that half curdled the blood in his veins, and slipping from his hold, he shot downward, while from his lips fell the usual exclamation:

"Bless me!"

In that unexpected transit his alert mind was made up to a course.

The cry told him of some one in danger; he knew the voice was a woman's.

Striking the bottom with an unpleasant thump, he gathered himself for any emergency ahead, and with a tremendous kick, sent the fireboard whizzing out into the apartment.

He saw the insensible form of Cecilia lying near; he saw Orle Deice in the act of springing forward to recover the knife which had been knocked from her grasp; he saw Herwin Reese, clutching a chair for support, while from a ghastly wound in his throat the life current was oozing, despite his efforts to staunch it; he saw Meg Semper struggling fiercely in the arms of the African; and as Nemil marked the lawyer's advent, the look on his black face seemed to say:

"Quick!—help here, or I shall be worsted!"

All this he took in at a lightning glance, and then, with his heart in his throat, eyes staring, hair standing, and whole system fired as if by an electric flame, he dashed forward.

"Give me a hand!" he yelled, throwing himself upon the hag, and twining himself around her with the elasticity of an eel.

Nemil wrenched the murderous knife from the madwoman and hurled it across the room; then, like a mighty vice, his arms closed around her. Crewly was tied, arm and limb, with their howling antagonist. It is impossible to describe the way in which he coiled up and clinched Meg Semper in his hold.

She cursed and raved in her wrath; spitting, scratching, kicking; and, occasionally, from those shriveled, bloodless lips issued a sound like the yelp and bark of a savage wolf.

"Down her! Down her!" shouted Crewly, as he forced her chin up and placed one knee in the center of her back.

Nemil threw his whole enormous weight upon her, and all three went to the floor with a crash.

"Hold tight! Hold tight!" screamed the lawyer, as that convulsed and quivering form, not yet subdued, fought still with all the desperation of her three-fold strength.

"She is mad!" snarled the African.

"Take care, or she will bite!"

"Considerably mad, I think!" Crewly sputtered. "But—I can't help—that—hold still, now; hang it!" twisting one hand in her matted hair, and pinning her head down.

"Reginald! Reginald! Quick!—your assistance. It is a madwoman!"

Reginald Darnley stood in the doorway. It was Orle Deice who cried out, and as she did so, she pointed toward the combatants.

"Pitch in!" was all the lawyer could find time to utter, for Meg nearly sent him rolling over, by a sudden contraction of her body.

Reginald waited not to ask questions, but threw himself at once into the struggle—and none too soon, for the hag had loosed one arm from the negro's grip and struck Crewly a blow that half blinded him.

"Hang it! if I had my umbrella, I'd ram it down your throat!" squealed the lawyer, as he buried his fingers in her scalp.

Hark! more to come yet. There was a sound of hurrying feet, and Henry Waldron, with two policemen at his side, bounded in among them.

But, he did not pause to aid those who were striving to conquer the crazed being; a pale, deathlike face had met his gaze, and with a groan of fear, he sprang toward Cecilia.

Tenderly he raised her fair head, with its wreath of golden tresses, to his knee; gently he whispered to ears that were just then opening to sounds of life.

"Darling!"

A smile, a loving look answered that one passionate word.

"She's done for!" exclaimed a voice, and, glancing up, Waldron saw a group standing before a motionless body that lay stretched upon the floor.

Meg Semper had expired in a horrible spasm.

But, two parties who had figured in the theatrical tableau were missing.

"Where's Rex Darnley?" where's that queen of devilry?" Christopher Crewly spun round and looked in vain for those whose names he had uttered.

In the exciting moment of Meg Semper's death, the lovers slipped out. The cab Reginald had brought was at the door, and in it they were soon speeding away.

A physician was immediately sent for, to dress the dangerous cut in Reese's neck. When he arrived, the wounded man had fainted from loss of blood. It was only after weeks of dread uncertainty, that he was pronounced safe; and so near had death hovered during his confinement to bed, that a wonderful change was worked in him. There is a quiet, respected clerk in one of the leading mercantile establishments in Richmond, whom we will call Herwin Reese; but, it is a vastly different man from the one who has acted through this narrative. He does not know, to this day, that, in attempting to destroy Reginald Darnley, he aimed at the life of his own brother.

The cold clay of Meg Semper was forwarded to Richmond, where it received private burial; Nemil paying expenses out of money he had hoarded up during his service with deceased. Then, finding himself alone, he counted over the greenbacks which his long, faithful obedience to the hag had enabled him to accumulate, and, with a heavy pocket, struck a line for the American El Dorado.

There was a wedding a short time since, in Richmond, and, though the marriage notice might not have read: "Henry Waldron to Cecilia Bernard," still it was this couple—under their proper names—and both are infinitely happy.

Christopher Crewly was presented with a brand new hat and duplicate white umbrella, before he left Washington, and became thoroughly satisfied with the general disposition of things.

Perhaps, as we slacken the pen on this, the last page of our narrative, Reginald Darnley is amid the sparkling dews, sunny landscapes and beguiling airs of a foreign clime, with the beautiful girl by his side, whose passionate love, at last, triumphed and made her the wife of the man she worshipped.

Mervin Darnley never learned to whom he owed his preservation from the poisoned glass—the lawyer in an eccentric modesty, refraining from mention of his knowledge of the fiendish plot. As yet, it is clothed in mystery.

Whether the manufacturer will ever revoke the edict of his son's banishment, time has yet to show; but, if he did, it would be well; for, with one like Orle Deice to counsel and advise, it is safe to infer, that the Reginald of years to come will be another than the once wayward votary of unbridled pleasures.

And now—but, wait a moment! one thing more. Christopher Crewly reached his native city in time to look after his "cow case," and, of course, he found it was his trick at the mill.

REMEMBRANCE.

And ever now it does not seem
Those happy hours are past;
We should have known that such a dream
As far too sweet to last.

The memory of our last farewell
The last few words we said;
Comes like the echo of a knell
That mourns the lost and dead.

I care not now if dark or bright
My future lot is cast,
Since all the beauty and the light
Are buried 'neath the past.

The Miner's Daughter.

—BY J. M. CLARK.

—Hear among the foot-hills, in the mountain region of California, a man had built a cabin, and lived alone for six months. A steady miner, a good companion, and a warm friend he proved to be. He worked in the quartz mill at the foot of the great hill, and began to be well known over the Oregon Gulch section. One day when the mill closed for repairs, he borrowed a pair of mules from a rancher just below the mining settlement and went away, riding one horse and leading the other by the bridle. In three days he came back, and not alone; for a beautiful girl in all the flush of beauty and grace, rode by his side, and he looked at her with a happy, loving glance, which showed that he was proud of her and loved her dearly, whoever she might be. It ran round through the camp that Nat Merritt had come home, and brought a handsome girl with him, and one by one, those who were intimate with him, began to stroll up to the cabin, smoking their pipes and, in a careless manner, but casting sidelong glances at the cabin, to catch a glimpse of the new comer. They made no secret of it, for there she was, sitting in the evening sunshine, on the bench in front of the cabin, with her golden head resting contentedly against his shoulder, and her soft brown eyes looking lovingly into his rough face.

"That gal is a crusher, Bill," said one rough miner to his fellow, when they had passed the pair. "Oh, my eye, did you ever see such a beauty? Hang me up for a Chinaman, if she don't beat the world."

"Oh, hush up, Bill Forbes," said his companion. "Let's go on. Don't you see she is looking at us?"

The two passed on, but others took their places, all anxious to get a look at the "handsome gal" Nat Merritt had brought home. Two young men, bolder than the others, stopped and spoke to the miner, and then, in a friendly way, they went on to the cabin, to see the girl.

"Glad you came up, Ben," said the miner. "Same to you, Phil; cause I want you to know my little gal. A good gal, she is, and I've bin having her get a little book-learnin' down to Frisco. Potheooks and hangers ain't in my line, notwithstanding they are mighty good things to hev a knowledge of. So I left Jennie in school, and they do say she is about the cutest scollar in the kentry. Jennie, these two boys come up to see me often. I reckon they won't come any less now that you are here, but the old man won't get much of their company. I'm a thinkin' in." This is Ben Sawyer, Jennie, and a better boy, though I do say it, you won't find in Oregon Gulch. This is Phil Carrier, his partner; they run the engine in the mill together. You must know them both."

Miss Jennie received the salutation of the young men demurely, at the same time studying them both through her long lashes. The first was a tall young man, in a rough mining garb, with dark hair and eyes, and a merry face. The young girl liked him in a moment. The other she did not decide upon so quickly. He had a handsome face, slight—had almost said effeminate—figure, but that his feats of muscle were so well known in Oregon Gulch. It was the slightly sneering look upon his dark face which Jennie did not like. The young men seated themselves, and with an excuse to Jennie for smoking, young Sawyer laid a bunch of cigarettes upon the bench between himself and Carrier, and plunged at once into a miner's paradise, the component parts of which were before him—a pretty girl, good tobacco, and pleasant weather. They talked on for more than two hours in the calm sunshine, and Jennie told them how her father would have lived out his simple life alone, and left her in San Francisco, although at heart he was pining for love of her, and would have given half the life allotted to him if she would spend the other half with him. But he did not know her, it seemed, for the same of her own accord, preferring to live a plain life with him, than alone in San Francisco. And so she had met him at Marysville, coming from the city alone. Ben Sawyer listened with a smile upon his handsome face, and let her talk on. It pleased him that this weak girl had yet been strong enough to throw aside the pleasures of city life for the rude companionship, for the sake of her old father. He went away feeling better for having seen her, and said as much to Carrier.

"Oh, you must fall in love with her of course," replied Carrier. "How many more times do you propose to make a fool of yourself?"

"I shall be a fool as far as women are concerned, until I die," replied Ben, carelessly. "But is she not a darling? Think of what she gave up for her father's sake."

"Yes, I know," replied Carrier. "I don't say anything against the girl, though I think she shows bad taste, too. Good-night; it's my trick at the mill."

"I'll be on hand at six o'clock. Good-night."

Carrier hurried away with a dark look upon his face, and when out of sight of his young companion, raised his hands with a gesture of wild hatred which was terrible.

"In this, as in every thing else, this man comes between me and that which I seek. Let him look out, for he is raising a devil in my blood which it may take trouble to lay."

Ben Sawyer went down to the village, and relieved the anxiety of those who were in doubt as to the identity of Jennie Merritt.

Like all country places, the villagers were on nettles if any thing transpired which they did not understand. Just at present something else occupied their attention, for a mail coach had come in, which had been robbed in the gulch by outlaws, and a tall, saturnine-looking individual, in a sombrero, looking like a desperado, was one in this year camp hez been putting these robbers on the scent of good plunder, else they'd never rush on us when we had such a heap of dust every time. Now I don't

know who the mean skunk is, but jest so sure as I ketch him, I don't wait fur no law but Judge Lynch's, I don't."

"Do you suspect any one, Hank?" asked Ben Sawyer.

"Kahn! say that I do. I wouldn't like to suspect none of the boys of that mean trick. See here, I don't mind their robbing the coach so much, that's nat'ral enough; but don't you see it's the mean spy I'm set aginst. But I'll tree him—you see if I don't."

"I hope you may, Hank."

"Hope I may! You bet I will, Ben! I'm arter him with a sharp stick. You hear me. He's livin' among us somewhar, and I'm in them reptiles when their plunder. The boys are on the watch."

A few weeks passed, and every night, when it was his "trick off," Ben Sawyer was at Merritt's cabin. Every one said that it would be a match, and nearly all thought well of it.

"Of course I must except one or two young ladies who considered themselves aggrieved, doubtless with good cause, by the desertion of Ben, and hated him with young lady fervor, and prophesied all manner of evils to fall upon him some day."

Carrier was at the cabin nearly as often as Ben, but with poorer success.

It was plainly to be seen that while Jennie liked him, because he was the companion of Sawyer, she would not have been deeply grieved if he had not come at all. No one could take a slight quicker than Phil Carrier, and he set his teeth savagely at times, as the bitter truth came home to him, and he matured, rapidly, a plan of revenge.

It was the middle of a beautiful summer day, as the young girl was working about the cabin, singing to herself, and dishing over what Ben said last night, when he asked her to be his wife. Just then the door was thrown open, and her lover, with hair and clothing in disorder, hurried into the house.

"Hide me somewhere, Jennie," he cried. "My life is beset by mountain robbers."

Jennie sprang to the door, closed it suddenly, and turned the key.

"Don't know why they don't come on," said Ben. "I had a struggle with two of them on the mountain, and shot one. There are over twenty of them, and I think they mean to attack the mill, if they can surprise it. They seem to know that we turned out a gold brick there last night."

"This way, Ben," said Jennie. "I'll hide you, and they won't do me any harm. If they stay long here, they may get into trouble, for Hank Stover has his eyes open."

There was a large piece of zinc nailed against the wall, behind the stove. Taking up a small iron bar which lay beside the hearth, she wrenched this off, and showed a deep cavity between the logs, large enough to hide a man.

"Get in quick, Ben," she cried; "I will nail it up after you are hidden."

"I don't like to leave you alone; they may do you some harm."

"Don't stop to talk, Ben. In with you, and leave the rest to me."

Ben entered the cavity, and heard her driving nails into the soft metal, to keep it in its place. Taking his bowie from its sheath, the imprisoned man bored a small hole in the zinc, so that he could watch, for he did not intend to remain a prisoner if she was in danger.

A sudden and angry sound rose in the gulch, the tramp of coming feet, and soon oaths and cries could be heard, mingled with other sounds, and a loud rap came at the door.

"Who is there?" demanded Jennie, quietly.

"Don't stop to talk, you," replied a rough voice. "Open the door, or it will be the worse for you."

"I am alone in the cabin, and will not open the door to men whom I do not know. Be careful what you do, for I am armed, and will shoot the first man who shows his head at door or window."

Ben saw that the brave girl had a revolver in her hand, and her finger on the trigger. There was a flash in her eyes, too, which showed plainly that she not only knew how to use the weapon, but meant to do it, if necessary.

The men outside were not easily frightened, and the sound of axes could be heard at the door. It burst easily from its fastenings, and they poured in. Before they had advanced two paces the pistol cracked thrice, Jennie retreating as she fired, until she had the wall behind her, and a heavy table in front.

Two men had been wounded, one desperately, by the discharge, and the wild band hesitated. They were a rough group, men of all nations, the sombrero of the Mexican mingling with the beaver-skin cap of the mountain-man and voyager.

"You she-devil!" hissed the man who led. "What will save you now from the rage of my men?"

"Nothing. I have two barrels left for you, the last for myself. I will not fall alive in the hands of these rascals."

"We don't want you now, my lady. We are going to search your cabin for a man that killed one of our men in the hills. I know he's here."

"Search for him, then. But beware how you approach me, for I will die sooner than suffer such as you to touch me."

They searched everywhere except in the right place, in the little kitchen, in the room occupied as a sleeping apartment by Jennie, but of course found nothing of the object of their search.

They came back sullenly enough, and the greater part scattered through the gulch, looking for Sawyer. The leader, a slight-built, bushy-bearded ruffian, paused in front of Jennie.

"I reckon we've lost him through you, and now you've got to go with me."

As he leaped suddenly forward she fired, and though the bullet struck him, he had grasped her wrist before she could fire another shot, and wrenched the weapon from her hand.

"I've got her," he cried, in a voice which was strangely familiar. "At last you are mine."

As she struggled to free herself there was a great crash, and the zinc flew from its fastenings as Ben Sawyer leaped into the room, bowie in hand.

With a savage cry the outlaw released his prize and sprung upon the new-comer, knife in hand. There was a confused struggle for a moment, and then the outlaw lay bleeding upon the floor, while Ben Sawyer, panting slightly, stood above him, with his bloody bowie raised above his head.

"Who comes next?" he shouted.

He was answered by a rush on the part of

the outlaws, when rifles began to crack outside, and the scattered forces of the villains rushed across the gulch, shouting to their friends within the cabin to save themselves by flight.

Giving up their attack upon Sawyer, they joined their comrades in flight, only to find themselves penned in by twice their number of miners, led by Hank Stover, who had been waiting his chance for many days.

Surrounded, desperate, they turned upon their assailants, and fell to a man, with their faces to the foe.

Ben Sawyer stooped over the body of his enemy, and wrenching his hand in the thick black beard, tore it from his face. Then he uttered a cry of surprise and started back. In the pallid countenance he recognized Phil Carrier. His eyes flared wide open for a moment, full of deathlike hate.

"Curse you! Here, as in all else, you triumph. Even in death I defy you, and leave to you my dying hate," he muttered.

A shudder, a convulsive movement of the strong limbs, and he was dead. They buried him with the rest in the gulch, and his name and history were only known to those who told the story. Ben Sawyer married Jennie Merritt, and is a leading man in the mining district about Oregon Gulch.

The Ebon Casket.

—BY JOSEPH E. BADGER, JR.

"Murder—robbery—thieves—MURDER—R-B!"

Such were the startling cries that had rung through the gloomy old house upon the preceding night, carrying with them horror, dread, and confusion, to all who were aroused from their sound, peaceful slumbers by the thrilling alarm in the dead of night. And now, when night was once more near at hand, Bertha Rowe sat in her chamber with bowed head and aching heart, and it seemed as though the past few hours had been a fearful dream, rather than reality.

Her old father had aroused the household with his wild screams, and when the terrified servants reached his chamber, he was found senseless upon his bed, while the blood streamed from a deep cut upon his head.

But he shortly recovered his senses, and declared that he had been robbed of an ebon casket containing five thousand dollars in bank-notes, and that he had recognized the robber as none other than Owen Pointsett. And then, before the day was middle-aged, the young man was arrested and cast into jail, at the charge of his one time benefactor and adopted father.

Bertha's mind was confused and in a whirl. She knew that Owen had not committed the black deed, and her suspicions pointed hard in another direction; but where were the necessary proofs? The sum of money had been called in by her father to liquidate a mortgage upon his estate, held by Colonel Everhard Sotheby, and who was likewise a suitor for Bertha's hand.

But the harsh-appearing soldier was not regarded with favor by the fair young maiden, whose heart had long since acknowledged its master in the young man, Owen Pointsett, who had been discarded by choleric Phineas Rowe when his chain was urged, and forbidden ever to approach the house.

That night Colonel Sotheby had come in answer to Mr. Rowe's note, and by some chance, or oversight, had omitted to bring the deed as requested, to discharge which the money had been drawn.

It was storming hard, and after some little debate it was resolved to defer the payment until the next day, and then the two old friends hobnobbed together until late over a jorum of punch.

We say, old because the acquaintance dated back to the birth of Sotheby, who was now some thirty odd years of age! He had won his rank by brave conduct while fighting for his country's freedom, against the yoke of England; and was accounted an honorable man.

But in one thing he had belied his reputation. Possessing a bold upon Phineas Rowe, he had used it to further his suit for the fair Bertha, and had promised to cancel the debt upon the day that she became his bride.

But the maiden did not like him, and finding that her mind was firmly made up, Mr. Rowe raised the money, at a heavy sacrifice.

And then, after the silence of sleep had fallen over the household, and the colonel been gone for several hours, the old man was awakened by the cold night-air streaming in upon him, and springing up in bed, he had distinguished a shadowy figure just lifting the precious ebon casket from the table where it had been left, owing to the potent strength of the punch-drink.

The robber heard him start, and springing forward, with a bitter curse, dealt the old man a fearful blow with the brass-bound butt of a pistol, effectually cutting short the loud cries that had this sketch. And then he sprang from the room, and fled.

Mr. Rowe declared that he had recognized the robber as Owen Pointsett, and it was found upon the young man's arrest that he had been absent from his lodgings until nearly daylight.

All believed in his guilt, as he would not confess where he had been, except Bertha, who too well knew the innate nobleness of her lover's heart to harbor such a suspicion.

And now he was in prison upon the charge of burglary and attempted murder!

The maiden felt that upon her alone rested the task of proving her lover's innocence, but how could she accomplish it? Not the slightest doubt rested upon her mind as to who was the real author of the crime, for she knew how wildly she was worshipped by the soldier; and that his passion would hesitate at nothing that afforded a hope of winning her hand.

He knew that his creditor could not again raise the large sum before the note was due, and by pressing his claim he could probably induce Bertha to marry him, if only to save her father from ruin. Thus Bertha reasoned; but was she right?

Suddenly arousing herself, the maiden sought the stables, and found a little boy, whom her father had taken from charity, at his request, and who was strongly devoted to his young mistress.

Bertha bade him keep a close watch upon the colonel; to follow him wherever he might go, and not to lose sight of him for an instant, except while in his own house. That same night Bertha sought and received permission of her father to visit a distant relation, living in the country, until after the trial.

Near noon of the next day, little Nat, the

Story of a Lamp-post.

BY SYLVESTER MARLIN

boy alluded to, entered a house situated in the same street as that of Colonel Sotheby, where he met a young and handsome man. A man, we say, if we judge from the dress; but in reality none other than Bertha Rowe, who had assumed this disguise, so foreign to her sex, the better to carry out her plans. "Well, Nattie, what is it?" she eagerly asked.

"You saw me follow the soldier man, didn't you? Well, he took his horse and rode an' rid, till I thought I'd ena most run my legs off, tryin' to keep in sight of him. But I did do it, cause you told me to, an' I'd a died clean out afore I'd missed him. You know what the old house used to be, what is all fored down now, don't you? Over by the big river? Well, he rid up that an' stopped, an' then, as he got down, he saved he had somethin' under his big cloak—a little box like that, what all black an' white, an' alone like everythin'."

"The chony desk?"

"I reckon, anyhow it is of you, says so. Wal, he got down, an' then went an' dug a hole with a great long load-sticker, like jest under the broken stile, an' put the box in, an' I kivered it up jest as keenful as you please. Then he laughed, an' rid away, an' I followed him, 'cause I know what he is now, or leastways was when I come over yere, concluded the boy, panting.

"Oh, Nattie, if it should be true, as I hope, you shall never regret this! I will be your life-long friend, and you shall be a brother to me," exclaimed Bertha, sinking into a chair, and pressing one hand upon her heart as if to still its wild throbbings.

"No, Miss Bertha, that can't be, 'cause you're an angel, an' I'm nothin' but a little devil—anyhow, that's what they all call me," quizzically observed Nattie, looking earnestly at his young mistress.

"Never mind that, now, my brave boy," at length said Bertha, arising and drawing forth her purse. "Here—take this, and go hire two horses, and bring them to the back door. Go quick, for we must lose no time, and have far to ride."

In a few minutes Nattie returned with the horses, and mounting, Bertha set out for the ruined house, followed by her young esquire. Scarcely had they left the street when Colonel Sotheby also rode out of the town and proceeded in the same direction, although by a different route.

The maiden rode rapidly and soon neared the vicinity of the deserted farm; but then, as they turned a bend in the road, they saw the form of her detested suitor just ahead of them. This was an unexpected combination, and for a moment she hesitated; but then a stern fire shone in her eyes, and her hand sought the polished butt of a pistol that, with its fellow, was concealed at her waist beneath the long skirt of the coat. And then, as the soldier turned from the road into the field, his intention was plainly evident.

At this moment he turned around in his saddle, and noticing the two riders behind him, paused as if to await their approach. Quickly forming her plans, Bertha dashed forward at full speed and passed by Sotheby with averted head, disappearing beyond the hill. Then she dismounted, and securing the horse, bade the boy follow her closely, and to note her every action; then cautiously approached the ruins from the opposite side to that where stood the broken stile. Bertha gained the desired point, and aided by the gloom of the fast-gathering night, peered from her covert and beheld the colonel sitting moodily upon a rock. His left arm was evidently injured, for it hung in a sling, and a lantern, unlighted, stood beside him. He did not appear conscious of surrounding objects, but to be buried in a deep reverie, while a bitter scowl settled down upon his entire forehead. And then, as he remained motionless, she glided forward, without moving, while Bertha and Nattie remained silently observing him, and gazed at him.

The girl was upon the point of rushing forth and during all when Sotheby suddenly roused up and lighted his lantern. Then he drew his sword, and placing the light where its rays were cast upon the ground beneath the broken stile, began removing the loose earth. Eagerly Bertha watched his actions, and when the stifled wailing cry was fairly smothered, she glided forward with a loud cry, followed by Nattie.

And Sotheby arose with a start, and clutched his sword firmly while glaring at the intruders. Bertha paused and leveled her pistol, while the boy grasped a fragment of rock and ran before her. Then Sotheby spoke.

"Who are you, and what do you want here?"

"I want that desk which you stole from my father."

"Your father?"

"Yes, my father, I am Bertha Rowe, and your crime is discovered, robber—almost murderer!"

The unmasked villain sprung forward, with a bitter curse of vague vengeance; but Nattie, flinging the stone at him, leaped forward and clasped his knees. Clinging to them with wonderful tenacity, the boy shouted to his young mistress to flee.

In vain the man strove to shake him off, and then, in his madness, Sotheby shortened his sword to rid himself of this troublesome incubus. With a cry of horror, Bertha leveled her pistol and fired; then, overcome by her excitement, she fell breathless and fainting on the ground, and uttered no word.

The robber uttered a wild cry and dropped his sword, while his right arm hung swaying at his side, shattered by the fortunate shot. Then Nattie grasped the long weapon with both hands, and glanced toward his young mistress, crying indignantly:

"Shall I strike him, Miss Bertha—shall I strike him?"

"No, no—let him go," gasped the maiden, recovering and coming forward. "Colonel Sotheby, you are at our mercy now, and your treatment depends mainly upon your behavior."

"What are you going to do with me?" he gasped, with a groan of agony.

"Take you back to the village," was the firm reply. "Hand me the boy, Nattie; and you, sir, take care; for if you are troublesome, remember that I have another pistol here, and I shall not hesitate to use it, if necessary."

And with considerable difficulty the robber was safely conveyed to the village, and delivered up to the proper authorities. He confessed his guilt, and Owen Poinsett was released. But the robber's trial never came off at mortal bar. He committed suicide by taking poison.

Bertha Rowe, in his remorse for having so nearly sacrificed an innocent life, condemned Owen to marry Bertha, and when he was gathered to his fathers, at a good old age, bequeathed them his entire property.

Recollections of the West.

BY CAPTAIN BRULIN ADAMS

I was horror-struck. And just then a brick came hurtling through the air, striking squarely on my glass box. It mashed me completely, and I expired.

The absurd did not last long. In a few minutes I heard the clang of chains, the snap of locks, voices growled savagely, and they all started off.

When my eye was repaired, and a new head put on me, I once more saw the gloomy building, and I looked at it suspiciously.

I have been burning every night, regularly, for several years, and nobody, to my knowledge, has lived in the house since. What became of Nellie, and her lover, I can't say.

Kenton's Shot for Life.

BY CAPTAIN BRULIN ADAMS

TOWARD the close of a hot day in August, a hunter, leaving the heavy timber of the bottom land, crossed, at a rapid gait, a narrow strip of open ground, and reaching the foot of the hill that lay upon the further side, commenced the steep ascent, every now and then glancing backward over his shoulder as though anticipating pursuit.

Nor was his seeming expectations disappointed, for before he had reached the crest of the hill above, half a score of Indians broke cover at the precise point where he himself had emerged, and at once catching sight of their quarry, gave tongue in a series of wild and startling yells.

THE AMERICAN PIANO

DOANE, WING & CUSHING, 423 Broome St., New York.

THE ONLY DIME NOVELS.

1. Malacca. 2. Privateer's Cruise. 3. Myra. 4. Alice Wilde. 5. The Golden Belt. 6. Chip, the Cave Child. 7. The Rector of '76. 8. Seth Jones. 9. The Slave Sculptor. 10. Backwoods Brandy. 11. Prisoner in Vintresse. 12. Bill Biddon, Trapper. 13. Cedar Swamp. 14. Emerald Necklace. 15. The Frontier Angel. 16. Uncle Ezekiel. 17. Madge Wythe. 18. Nat Todd. 19. Massasoit's Daughter. 20. Florida. 21. Sybil Chase. 22. The Maid of Beopos. 23. Winifred Winthrop. 24. The Trail Hunters. 25. The Peon Prince. 26. Breath'n of the Coast. 27. Daughter of Liberty. 28. King Barnaby. 29. The Forest Spy. 30. Pat Pommer's Ward. 31. The Double Hero. 32. Irona. 33. Mount Guine. 34. Ruth Margerie. 35. East and West. 36. Ribbeness of Miami. 37. Godbold, the Spy. 38. The Wrong Man. 39. The Land Claim. 40. Unto the Dange. 41. The Hunter's Cabin. 42. The King's Man. 43. The Alamo. 44. Agnes Falkland. 45. Esther. 46. The Border Riders. 47. The Two Scouts. 48. Oronoco, the Huron. 49. The Cold Trail. 50. The Black Ship. 51. The Two Guards. 52. Single Eye. 53. Hates and Loves. 54. Myrtle. 55. Off and On. 56. Almo's Plot. 57. The Scout. 58. The Mad Hunter. 59. Kent, the Ranger. 60. Jo Davies' Client. 61. Laughing Eyes. 62. The Red Rover. 63. The Indian Princess. 64. Rangers of Mohawk. 65. The Wrecked Ship. 66. The Hunter's View. 67. Indian Jim. 68. The Brigantine. 69. Back Hollow. 70. The Indian Queen. 71. The Lost Trail. 72. The Moose Hunter. 73. The Silver Bugle. 74. Chesapeake Cruise. 75. Red Outlaw. 76. The Scout's Prize. 77. Quindaro. 78. The Rural Scouts. 79. Schuyllin Rangers. 80. Eagle Eye. 81. The Two Hunters. 82. The Wrecked Canoe. 83. The Golden Harpoon. 84. The Seminole Chief. 85. The Knighted. 86. Red Plume. 87. On the Deep. 88. Captain Molly. 89. Star Eyes. 90. Cast Away. 91. The White Hermit. 92. The Twin Scouts. 93. The Ureole Sisters. 94. The Mid Skipper. 95. Eph Peters. 96. Little Moccasin. 97. Doomed Hunter. 98. Ruth Harland. 99. Overboard. 100. Karabo. 101. Maid of Wyoming. 102. Hearts Forever. 103. Big Foot, the Guide. 104. Gully, or Not Gully. 105. The Man in Green. 106. Simple Phil. 107. The Peddler Spy. 108. The Lost Ship. 109. Kidnapped. 110. The Hidden Home. 111. The Sawney Fox. 112. The Falcon Rover. 113. Rattletrap. 114. Ned Starling. 115. The Sons of Liberty. 116. Port at Last. 117. The Mohican Maiden. 118. The Water Wolf. 119. The Five Champions. 120. The Hunchback. 121. Valued Benefactress. 122. The Red Prince. 123. The Missing Bride. 124. Sumner's Scout. 125. The Hunted Life. 126. Old Jupon. 127. Bald Eagle. 128. The Gold Miners. 129. Blackeyes. 130. Brave Heart. 131. Wrecker's Daughter. 132. Yankee Keph. 133. Road-weather-Jack. 134. The Cherokee Chief. 135. The Indian Hunters. 136. The Tractor Spy. 137. The Scout. 138. The Mountain. 139. The Border Riders. 140. The Border Riders. 141. The Border Riders. 142. The Border Riders. 143. The Border Riders. 144. The Border Riders. 145. The Border Riders. 146. 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THE COUNTRY DANCE.

BY JOE JOY, JR.

"To your places," goodness gracious, Don't go like a flock of geese! Honors all! Keziah Muggins, Take your hat off, if you please."

"Forward four and back again," Jerry, round the other way! "Balance all." Jake, how you topple, Have you lost your balance, say?"

"Lemonade all." Bless me, Hiram, Don't kick your heels so high! "Swing your partners," John and Sally, Stop your kisser on the sly."

"Right and left all round." Not that way! You are getting mixed up there! "Sashay all." Your cornfield gatters Make more noise than I can bear."

"Forward two and back again." Jim, don't throw yourself away. Dos-a-dos. Don't get excited! Keep your coats on, boys, I pray."

"Gentlemen, balance to the right." There, you all are jumping wrong! "Half-lemonade." Uriah Williams, Don't you think you're going it strong?"

"Hands all round." Now mind your eye there, Jake, you have never danced before! "Ladies change." Polly Simmons, There you go upon the floor!"

"Forward four and back again." Stop, until I rosin my bow. Ladies, balance to the right. Caleb Short, don't stab your toe."

"Gentlemen balance to the left." Snap, there goes my little string. "Balance to your partners." So, Hez, quit pinching Polly King."

"Lemonade all." It's getting hot here. Cale, you dance like climbing up stairs. "Ladies."—There, my E string's busted. "Swing your partners to their chairs."

The Black Spider.

A TALE OF THE HIGH SEAS.

BY CAPTAIN CHARLES HOWARD.

"Sir, will you not spare my life?" pleaded a beautiful girl, just entering womanhood, who knelt before the bloodiest freebooter of modern days, who, from the free decks of the ship he had just captured, was ordering the women and children who had been spared, upon a raft at the vessel's side.

"For years, sir, I have been in France, and was returning to my native land, where father and mother wait and pray for my safe return. For their sakes spare me."

"Go aboard that raft, girl!" hissed the buccaner, as he spurned the fair suppliant from his unyielding presence. "San Diego can not be made foolish by the tears of a woman. Spiders, carry her to the raft."

Instantly several stalwart men darted forward, and Bertha Mitchell was borne to the raft. Then the ropes were severed.

Amid the shrieks of the doomed ones, the raft drifted away, and was soon lost to the pirates' sight by the darkness that brooded over the boisterous Atlantic.

"That's better than to cut their throats," said the Black Spider of the Atlantic, as San Diego was called, turning from the side of the vessel. "If they ever see home again, may I never see heaven."

"Clinton Dryden, you hear my words. I ask no further parley with you. I have selected a husband for my daughter, and that man—Ross Bowen—she must wed!"

"So be it," said the young sailor, and without another word he folded his arms and strode, calm and collected, from the banker's presence.

For many months the handsome captain of the Black Eagle had loved the fair and only daughter of the richest banker in the Crescent City, but was not greatly disappointed when her father refused him her hand.

He knew Ross Bowen as few men knew him. He knew that the wealth the old *vous* revealed in was almost as ill-gotten as the pirate's; and, as he walked from the banker, he vowed, inaudibly, that the woman he loved should never wed Ross Bowen.

His vessel lay at the wharf, undergoing needed repairs; and a week after the refusal of a hand, as recorded above, the banker's daughter was missing.

Suspecting the true state of affairs, the banker, accompanied by several officers of the law, came on board the Black Eagle and caused the arrest of its captain for abduction.

"My daughter is on board his infernal ship!" cried the banker.

"You are at liberty to search it," was the confident reply of the young captain.

The vessel underwent a thorough examination, but the missing girl rewarded not the eyes of her father.

"You see she is not on my ship," said young Dryden, gazing triumphantly into the banker's eye. She must have fled from you of her own accord, and I do not blame her, when you would wed her to the greatest villain that ever traversed the streets of New Orleans."

"Release him," said the banker, turning, deeply chagrined, from the young sea captain, and the trio left the vessel.

When the sun reached the meridian, the Black Eagle spread her sails, and the Crescent City faded from sight.

"Now must I release my prisoner," said Clinton Dryden, going below, as the shades of evening were falling upon the water. "Did the banker think that I, who adore his daughter, would leave her to wed, by force, one whom she detests?" and a triumphant cackling parted the young man's lips.

Below, Clinton revealed a hidden door, and a joyous cry greeted his ears.

"Safe at last, Bertha!" he cried, springing to the side of a beautiful girl, who reclined on a luxurious couch, in the magnificent hidden state-room. "We are now fairly on the Atlantic, Bertha, and in Venice we enter that joyous life, never to be marred by the hand of man."

She smiled at the future she had painted in glowing colors, and together the twain ascended to the deck, where the captain's triumph was hailed with glad acclamation by the sailors.

Day after day the vessel pursued her course across the ocean, and the lovers revolved in each other's smiles.

One Stygian night something struck the sides of the Black Eagle with a dull thud, and the watches were frightened from their posts by dark forms that swarmed upon the deck.

"The Black Spider!" was the cry that parted the lips of the Americans, and from his slumber sprang Clinton Dryden to lead his men to the combat.

Bloody and brief was the battle, and the young captain and a number of his bravest men found themselves lashed to the masts, while the pirates disappeared below for the purpose of sacking the vessel.

A lantern guided San Diego to the captain's cabin, and throwing aside the little door of the wine-closet, he drew forth a bottle of rare vintage and stepped to the table.

"I will drink the best before my men arrive," he muttered, breaking the neck of the bottle with his pistol.

The ruby liquid had touched his lips, when a slight noise startled him, and a moment later one of the carved panels in the wall before his eyes flew up, and revealed a beautiful woman reclining on a couch.

With an oath, and trembling like the aspen's leaf, the Black Spider sunk beside the table, and stared at the supposed apparition. "My God!" he cried, at length; "the sea gives up the dead! Long have I been haunted by the fearful face I drove upon a raft in mid-ocean four years ago—the face of Bertha Mitchell. But now, in cold flesh, she comes when my hands are red with blood. Jesu! is there no mercy?"

And the pale lips the pirate gazed upon, parted in the echo:

"No mercy!"

"Heavens! the dead speak!" shrieked San Diego, springing to his feet, and darting, never once looking back, from the cabin.

He gained the deck, and his loud voice called his men from the masts, who were presented a terribly frightened countenance.

"The dead occupies a state-room on this vessel!" he cried, as they gathered round him. "To your vessel, Spiders! The riches of heaven could not detain me here one minute."

"But the prisoners!" cried a pirate, pointing to the men bound to the masts, who were to have been burned alive on the Black Eagle after the sack.

"Kill them and come!" cried Diego, springing toward his vessel, lashed to the Black Eagle.

With flashing sabers the pirates sprang to the bound men, and the blade of the foremost was raised over Clinton Dryden's head, when a shriek broke from Diego's lips:

"The dead comes!" he cried, pointing to the main hatch, above which a white figure was slowly appearing.

The pirates turned, the sabers fell bloodless at their owners' sides, and, pell-mell, all rushed toward their own vessel.

"Cut the ropes!" cried San Diego, cowering, in a cold sweat, upon the decks of his ship. "My God! who ever thought that the dead would live. Away, Spiders, away!"

THE BLACK SPIDER.



The ropes were severed by the sabers of the pirate crew, as thoroughly frightened as their leader, and the Black Spider drifted from the scene of conflict.

Bertha soon severed the cords that bound her lover and the remnant of his brave traits to the masts, and with grateful hearts, they witnessed the departure of the frightened, terrible Spiders.

The next day the Black Eagle resumed her voyage, and, in time, reached Venice, where Bertha Mitchell—the young girl whom San Diego had once doomed to the raft, but who was saved by an English vessel, after drifting for three days in mid-ocean—wedded the young captain of the Black Eagle.

When the lovers returned to the Crescent City, the once obdurate banker warmly wrung Clinton Dryden's hand, and thanked him for saving his daughter from Ross Bowen, who had perished on the galleys.

San Diego, the Black Spider, was so thoroughly frightened by the specter of the state-room, that he relinquished murder on the high seas, and retired to Lisbon, where he met the proper reward for his crimes—a stiletto-cleft heart.

Border Reminiscences.

Old Grizzly's Mustang Hunt.

BY RALPH RINGWOOD.

"BOY, if yer wants some fun, jess gether yer lariats an' kem wi' me," said old Rube, riding unexpectedly into camp one morning.

He and Grizzly Adams had left us, two days before, up on the edge of the Staked Plains, to look after a trail we had crossed while pursuing a band of Comanches who had burned the house of a settler.

We did not expect to see either of them so soon, as the trail led westward, and they were famous for "hanging on," so the appearance of Rube was something of a surprise.

Tin cups and roasting meats were dropped, and the fellows eagerly crowded around the old trapper.

"What's up, Rube?"

"Mustangs, an' a heap uv 'em. Yer know ther big paint as we tried ter rope last season, don't yer boyees?"

"Yes! yes! Is he there?" exclaimed half a dozen voices excitedly.

"He ain't nothin' else; bigger and purtier'n ever. I tell yer, lads, he's a scrounger," replied Rube, who had dismounted, and was

hastily bolting a piece of half-cooked buffalo-rump.

"Where's the Grizzly?" asked one of the boys.

"Back at Injun Run, a-watchin' ther mustangs," replied Rube. "Kem, boyees," he continued, "hurry up, er mebbey they won't be thar when we kem to look fur 'em."

The command was hardly necessary, as those who could be spared from camp were already in the saddle, ready to be off.

It seems that the previous season a portion of the company had been down in this section, and while scouting along the border of the Comanche country had sighted a large drove of wild mustangs, unusually fine animals, which were led by a large "paint," or piebald steed, whose fleetness of foot was described as something remarkable. Another "white horse of the prairies," I thought at the time, and then gave the subject no further attention.

But, it now appeared that there was really something in the report, for I well knew that old Rube never exaggerated such things or allowed himself to become enthusiastic without full and sufficient reason therefor.

Indian Run, a small creek emptying into a tributary of the Pecos, well bordered with timber, and skirting on its northern limits an immense reach of prairie that swept away southward to the base of Gaudalupe mountains.

Upon this prairie the drove of mustangs had been sighted, and old Grizzly had taken a position in the timber to watch their movements, while Rube came on to camp to give us the news.

And very acceptable news it was, as most of our cattle had been badly knocked up by the last scout, and fresh ones were wanted. Luckily there were half a dozen or so of us splendidly mounted on "American" horses, and upon these we depended for success in capturing the game.

Riding leisurely, so as to come upon the scene of action as fresh as possible, we reached Indian Run, and found old Grizzly on post, about an hour after noonday.

The drove were not in sight, but the bear-hunter told us they had fed around a point of timber below where the run made a sudden bend.

"Lively, boyees!" exclaimed the old fellow, "ther man as ar' lucky enuff to rope this paint ar' a-goin' to hev a big thing to himself. Ralph, ther looks 's if he moult do it on his 'clay-bank'."

"Well, old man," I replied, "if I do rope him, I promise that he shall be yours."

THE BLACK SPIDER.



"Yer don't! Hooray! Dang my ole moccasins of ever I gits ther crittur atween my legs, I'll make ther red-skin think as how somethin' ar' bustud!"

Preparations were at once made to begin the hunt.

Those of us who were best mounted, were to keep within the timber, and approach as near the drove as possible, while the others, some five-and-twenty in number, were to strike out into the prairie, and, taking advantage of a slight swell, take positions so as to head off the animals, and thus keep them within certain limits.

These preliminaries were successfully carried out, and at a signal from Rube, who had ascended a pecan tree to take observations, and see when the scouts were duly posted, we moved off toward the point whence we were to break cover.

The drove was, as Rube had said, a very large one, and contained many fine animals besides the leader, who, even from the distance we were, could be seen to be a horse of magnificent proportions and action.

For half an hour the chase was confined within the semicircle inclosed by the pickets; but as we pressed the mob closer and closer, roping several of them in the mean time, I saw indications upon the part of the "paint" to break through, and get into a wider field.

Old Rube, who had been hanging around me in all the turnings and twistings of the race after the stud, for upon him alone I had fixed my eyes, saw the same, and yelled out for me to close, or I would lose my chances.

The next moment the break would have been made, when, fortunately, the mustang stumbled badly—in fact, fell to his knees, and before he could recover, I shot forward to his side, and, with a lucky cast, dropped the noose fairly over his head.

Old Grizzly had been watching my movements closely, and while the struggle between myself and the stud was at its height, he dashed up, yelling like a red-skin, and waving his coon-skin cap over his head.

"Hooray, boyee! Hold him tight, while

I— Look yander!" and jerking his horse back upon his haunches, he pointed off toward the southern border. A glance was sufficient to reveal the cause of this sudden exclamation.

Just along the crest of a swell in the prairie, distant some two, or perhaps three miles, a number of dark objects were seen rising and falling with a regular movement, some of which occasionally flashed brightly as when the sun is reflected from a burnished metallic surface.

"Injuns!" shouted Rube.

"You bet, an' a big party at that," replied Old Grizzly. "By ther eternal, boyes, I'll never do fur to give up ther paint, now we've got him."

But there did not appear to be any help for it. The horse was making a furious resistance, charging upon us, lashing out and biting at the rope that held him, with a viciousness I had never seen equaled.

"Rope him, Rube!" suddenly shouted the bear-tamer. "Rope him on 't'other side, an' mebbey you kin lead ther durned brute!"

The hunter's larriat instantly flew through the air, the noose falling squarely in place. And thus, upon each side, we galloped forward, hoping to drag the stud along. But this only seemed to render him more furious, and planting his fore-feet in the earth, he lay back upon his haunches, and refused to move.

While this struggle was going on, the Indians were rapidly approaching, and having surmounted the rise, were in full view.

"Pach, by ther eternal!" exclaimed Rube, who had been closely scanning the war-party as they came on at full speed. "What ther deuce ar' they doin' hyar et this season?"

"Ther durn'd niggers!" exclaimed Old Grizzly. "Allers a-turmin' up when they're leastly wanted! But by ther everlastin', they shan't hev ther crittur! I'll shoot him fust!" And he was rapidly unslinging his rifle from his back, when a new thought seemed to enter his head.

"I'll ride him, boyees! I will, by Davy! Hold yer lariats tight, till I mounts!" and he sprang from the back of his mustang, and quickly approached the struggling stud.

I knew it was useless to argue the matter; besides, there was no time to do so. We had either to cast loose our lariats and run for it, or else stand and show fight against the overwhelming numbers that were bearing swiftly down upon us. Seeing that the bear-tamer was determined to mount the wild animal, I made a sign to Rube, and in-

stantly the lariats on either side were stretched to their utmost, nearly choking the steed from his feet, and holding him steadily in one spot.

Old Grizzly watched for and caught his chance, ran quickly forward, barely dodging a fearful stroke from the mustang's heels, and in a twinkling was seated upon his back.

Before the stud had recovered from his surprise the fearless man had reached forward, grasped both lassoes, and shouted for us to cast off.

This we did, and turned to flee just as the first arrows of the Apaches began to fly about our ears.

So pressing was the emergency, that for several hundred yards I had no opportunity of looking back, the prairie being a "hog-wallow," and consequently it required all my attention to see that my horse did not stumble and fall; but when I did glance over my shoulder I witnessed a sight that was both alarming and ludicrous in the extreme.

The Indians had become considerably scattered, those upon the flanks breaking away right and left in pursuit of the rangers, but there was still a very considerable body at the center, right in the midst of whom I saw Old Grizzly. He was still seated on the back of the mustang stud, but flying up and down in the air in a manner that was supremely ludicrous, as the wild horse leaped and plunged to get rid of his burden.

The Apaches were evidently in the wildest state of excitement and confusion. That they recognized the daring rider in their midst was plain from their shouts and exclamations, among which, even at the distance I was, I could hear the words, "Man of the Bears," by which title my old friend had become known all over the western tribes.

The old hunter had all he could do in attending to keeping his seat upon the mustang's back, and hence made no attempt to use his weapons. Seeing this, the Indians, evidently determined to take him alive, gathered around the stud and got ready their lassoes.

All this I saw by occasionally turning in the saddle as I scoured across the prairie toward our distant camp. Again I looked back, mind you, we were being hard pressed, and looking beyond my immediate pursuers, saw that the "paint" mustang had broken away and was coming straight after me like the wind, with Old Grizzly still clinging like a monkey to his back.

But while inclined to laugh, for the whole thing was fearfully comical, I felt a sudden thrill of fear as I saw the Apaches get-

ting their bows in order, and rapidly fitting their arrows to the string.

The speed of the wild horse when he ran in a straight line and steadily, was so much superior to their own animals, that they felt the necessity of using their weapons, if they would prevent the ultimate escape of their well-known and dreaded enemy. Presently, I heard the sharp clatter of hoofs rapidly approaching, and another moment the "paint" mustang, with his plucky rider, swept by me like a flash.

The horse was now actually wild with terror and pain, for his hind-quarters were fairly bristling with arrows, while, with a feeling of pain I have but seldom experienced, I saw that more than one of the shafts had found lodgment in the back and shoulders of my old friend.

Soon after this, relief came. Most of the boys had reached camp far ahead of Rube and myself, and hastily collecting the others, they now came thundering across the prairie, riding in solid column straight at the Apaches, who had pulled up as if to await the attack.

They didn't wait long, however. The sharp, ringing cheer of the rangers seemed to scatter the last bit of courage, and away they went southward, under lash and spur, and were soon out of sight behind a swell in the prairie.

It now remained to capture Old Grizzly, who was still scudding away on the back of the stud, and this proved to be no small matter. We surrounded him at last, however, and the terrified mustang was brought to terms by yet another lasso around his throat.

"Looker hyar, boyee," said the bear-hunter, who was seated on the grass rubbing his limbs. "yer may keep ther durned critter. 'Tee had ridin' enuff outen him ter last. Cuss the beast, I don't b'lieve thar's a piece uv skin left thar es big es a bullet-patch."

But, unluckily, the splendid animal was destined to serve no one. One of the arrows had penetrated deep into the flank, touching a vital spot, and on the following day he died.

The wounds of Old Grizzly were severe, but not dangerous, and after we were satisfied that none of the arrows were poisoned, many a laugh was had at the old fellow's ride on the "paint" mustang.

THE BLACK SPIDER.

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